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Wilson, James P. 1769-1830

The primitive government of  
Christian churches

John Lapsley

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*James P. Wilson*







THE  
PRIMITIVE GOVERNMENT  
OF  
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

ALSO,  
LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

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BY JAMES P. WILSON, D. D.,  
Late Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

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“Nil nisi justum suadet, et lenē.”

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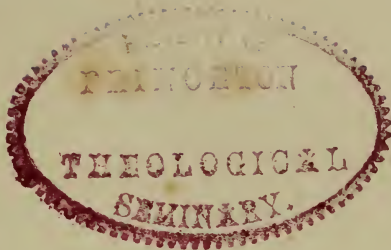
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,  
THE SERMON,  
PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR,  
BY REV. THOMAS H. SKINNER, D. D.

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### ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS work is a defence against unfounded pretensions; and intended to exhibit, without wounding any individual, the illiteracy of excluding from mercy or covenant favors, all but the subjects of the hierarchy; and of making mute presbyters a characteristic of the primitive church. The inquiry is first orderly pursued through the early testimonies, that innovations might be detected; and the Scriptures afterwards examined according to original ideas.

This book has been printed in numbers in the Christian Spectator, but merely with the design to elicit objections, that it might be rectified, if found unjust, or in error on any point. Compensation was offered by the publisher at New Haven, but refused, because the right was reserved.





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sors of the evangelists, and Timothy is made bishop of Ephesus.—How Timothy received authority and for what purpose. An evangelist before he came to Ephesus. He was left by Paul at Ephesus, the last time Paul was there, Timothy having returned thither after Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Timothy left Ephesus after ordaining presbyters there, and came to Paul in Macedonia, before his return to Jerusalem and first imprisonment. The first letter to Timothy was before he left Ephesus to go to Paul in Macedonia, and instructed him in choosing and ordaining the presbyters. He accompanied Paul to Jerusalem and Rome, where he was during the Apostle's first imprisonment. The second letter to Timothy was written during the second imprisonment, and discovers that Timothy was not then at Ephesus; it calls him to Rome; and it no where appears that Timothy ever returned to Ephesus after ordaining the elders there, -

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Under the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, the extraordinary officers were the apostles, to confer gifts and teach by means of

the inspiration of suggestion; the evangelists, to plant and water churches; prophets, with occasional inspiration to explain the Scriptures.—The gifts are described, 1 Cor. xii. 28; Rom. xii. 6—8; Ephes. iv. 11, 12.—Officers qualified to administer ordinances, succeeded the extraordinary gifts, and churches, which were Christian societies, were substituted for the synagogues. But two orders or kinds were adopted—presbyters, who were called also pastors, to teach, ordain, administer baptism and the eucharist, and to govern, and deacons to serve.—Among the presbyters, a bench of which was at first in every church, and but one presbytery in a society or city, there was one who presided, denominated *πρεσβυτης*, angel, and by other names; yet the ordination was not different from that of the rest.—The first change was by a gradual transition into pastoral or parochial episcopacy, afterwards into diocesan.—This was established by the Council of Nice, and at length produced papacy, - - - - 270

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## S E R M O N . \*

AMONG the reasons, my brethren, which induced the speaker to undertake, at your request, the performance of the present service, he is unwilling any one should reckon, a sense of his competency to the task. If one's ability to speak justly of another, is at all proportional to their degrees of mutual conformity in talents and virtues, there are not many persons among the acquaintance of your late pastor, of whatever experience and attainments, who ought to think themselves adequate to a complete description of him. An intimacy of nearly sixteen years, has made him who addresses you very conscious, that his inferiority in age, though a great disqualification, is probably the least considerable point in his unfitness to that undertaking. He was led, however, to hope, that he would receive so much assistance from the papers of his lamented friend, that he might almost make him his own biographer; but, to his great surprise, that peculiar man was found to have left not a sentence about himself, among all his manuscripts; nor have many particulars in his history been ascertained, besides such as are of extensive notoriety.

\* Preached in the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, January 16th, 1831.

Hence it became necessary to make a discourse of a very different character from that which was first projected, and which perhaps would have better met your anticipations.

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MICAH VI. 9.—The Lord's voice crieth unto the city; and the man of wisdom shall see thy name. Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

It is one of the consequences of man's fallen state, that he is apt to misapprehend the design of God's gracious measures for his recovery. Shadows of good things he mistakes for the reality; ordinances of mercy become means of spiritual pride; grace is turned into licentiousness; and Christ himself is made the minister of sin.

The prophet had given, in the Jews of his day, an exemplification of this trait of human perverseness. He had represented that idolatrous generation as apparently sensible to the dangerous consequences of their idolatry, and desirous to discover some way in which they might avert the divine displeasure. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord; and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings; with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression; the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" These interrogatories betray a radical misconception of the purpose for which sacrifices were appointed. They make God vindictive; and appeasable, only by expensive oblations. So had the heathen, amidst their guilty darkness and fear, reproached the divine nature; but that the Depositories of revealed

truth should have fallen into this error, was scarcely to have been expected. An illustrious example in their own history should have made them wiser. The royal penitent's memorable declarations—"Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering; the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit—a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise," should have left them at no loss, as to the way of regaining the divine favor. But this people were strangers to the relentings of godly sorrow; they had formed no purpose of a genuine change of life; but merely desiring to avert the consequences of their infidelity, and thinking this might be done by offering costly sacrifices, they declare themselves ready to go to any practicable length, in such a way of escaping the displeasure of God. The prophet answers rebukefully to their infatuated inquiries, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Sacrifice not your first-born, but your sins. Reform your dishonest, oppressive, profane practices. Humble yourselves before God with a penitent, sin-renouncing, obedient spirit. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The madness which the prophet thus sharply reprehends, in his own people, has not been limited to them. There are multitudes even now, who, to escape the punishment of their sin, would do any thing which might be exacted, in the way of expense or penance—would fast and wear sackcloth, and give all their goods to feed the poor, and their own bodies to be burned, who yet most

stubbornly withhold from God the acceptable sacrifice of a subdued and obedient heart.

This, however, is God's great demand of the sons of men—the main end and argument of all his overtures, ordinances, instructions, and commandments; and any ritual observances which do not involve compliance with this demand, are a perversion of the right ways of the Lord, to which and its authors, as in the case of Cain, the beginner of this iniquity, God hath not, and, without being opposed to his own institutions, cannot have respect. Hence the remonstrant strain of our prophet, after exposing in the manner we have seen, the mistake of his countrymen—a most culpable mistake, which might well incur a divine rebuke. What was the pretext of that ignorance which caused the perplexity of this people? Had not their means of information been adequate? Had God winked at their iniquity? Had he called them to repentance with an indistinct or feeble voice? His voice, said the prophet, “crieth”—not speaketh with a still small accent—but crieth, putteth on strength, calleth aloud, and reacheth afar—not to one or another, but the chief place of concourse, “the city,” where the multitudes of men dwell—to all, from the least to the greatest, doth the almighty voice extend: As said Solomon, speaking of the Lord's voice under the fit names of wisdom and understanding—“Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city; at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men.”

And now, if we would know what had hindered this people from comprehending that voice, by attending to the



next words of the prophet, we shall learn that they had become so worldly-minded, so sensual, that in respect to the things of the Spirit of God they were as men without understanding. Into this deep fatuity does the prophet insinuate they had sunk, when to his announcement that the Lord lifteth up his voice, he upbraidingly subjoins, "the man of wisdom shall see thy name." This it is which makes graceless men contemptuous of God's calls, that they heed not these calls as coming from God; full of all that is awful in his nature and imperative in his sovereignty. If they so regarded them, both their ears would tingle until they ceased to resist them; and that they should not so regard them, is almost enough, as the Scripture in several places intimates, to provoke unconscious nature itself into outcries of wonder and sorrow.

And shall this stupidity pass unrebuked? Shall not that divine majesty which is not acknowledged in God's calls to repentance, assert itself at length in inflictions of just displeasure? Why then the mention in our passage, of "the rod," along with "the voice of the Lord;" the one to punish the contempt of the other. If ye will not hear his voice, said the man of God, "hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." That awful rod which is already stretched out, before your eyes, in the judgments which are abroad in your land, who think ye hath appointed it, and for what purpose? You can despise calls to repentance, as though they were but the breath of a mortal like yourselves; shall the judgments which are upon you, be held in like contempt?

Now what, brethren, was the manner and fashion of that crying voice of God, which it was so fearful a thing not to understand? Was it, do ye suppose, like that which poured through the open heavens at the baptism of Christ?

Did it sound forth from the clouds with the loudness and terribleness of thunder? It was the simple expression of his will by the ministry of his servants, the prophets. So it was that God anciently spake to the fathers of the Jewish people. The voice of the prophets—that was His voice of which it is said, the voice of the Lord is powerful, is full of majesty, breaketh the cedars of Lebanon, maketh Sinai to skip like a young unicorn, divideth the flames of fire, shaketh the wilderness, maketh the forest bare, by which the heavens and all their hosts were made, which spake and it was done, which commanded and it stood fast—that same almighty voice proceeded forth from the mouth of holy men of old, when they spake in the prophetic character.

I. And now, in shaping the tenor of our discourse to the occasion of the meeting, our first remark is, that the fact just asserted in respect to the ancient prophets, is true also, in respect to the Christian ministry, the prophets of the present dispensation. The official and veritable utterances of the evangelical ministry are as surely “the voice of the Lord” as were the testimonies of the holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The outward rank and condition of that ministry—their birth, breeding, civil standing, and connexions—for the most part confessedly low, make nothing against this high speech concerning them. For the prophets and even the apostles, what were some of them in these unessential respects? Nay, what, in such respects as these, was the Incarnate Word, the voice of the Lord embodied and speaking with its own and not another’s mouth?—It shows the depth to which our nature is degraded, that almost nothing seems of worth in the world’s estimation, compared to outward distinctions and possessions: And, therefore, God, that he might employ the strongest mean

possible for recovering us from this insanity, hath poured the full vials of his infinite contempt on these idols of mankind; in his choice and separation of persons, both unto the honors of his heavenly kingdom, and unto the management and labors of his kingdom on earth: Not deigning, as his usual way has been, even to look on princes, and judges, and mighty commanders, while he puts his Holy Spirit in poor, unknown, uncultivated men; and from the mouth of such babes and sucklings, sounds out his own almighty voice, by which he hath shaken the earth, and not earth only, but also heaven; and will yet shake the deepest foundations of hell, and establish order and peace throughout his vast dominions, never to be disturbed again in all the ages of eternity.

If any one still think, that the claim which we set up in behalf of the ministry of reconciliation, cannot be sustained, since these men, not being inspired, are fallible and may misinform their fellow men, which it were blasphemy to say the voice of God might do—let such an one call to mind, that the present ministers of the word have this advantage over the Old Testament prophets, that whereas those prophets received the communications of the divine will, in sundry parts, here a little and there a little, unto us are committed at one and the same time, the whole mass of the inspired oracles, both of the old and the new dispensations; whereby we are far better furnished as organs of the counsel of God to mankind, than they were, although unto them the manifestations of the Spirit were immediate and fresh. For all those manifestations, whenever and to whomsoever first made, having been written down under infallible guidance, and the record intrusted to an almighty guardianship, are at this moment as genuine, as excellent, and as directly from

the Spirit, as if they had just been given to the world: The only difference is, that while ancient prophets received them in visions, dreams, extasies, and trances, they are presented to our minds through the medium, and surely not less desirable medium, of letters. Though the Christian ministry, then, be not inspired men, they possess all the inspirations ever given—all that God has thought needful, for the benefit, whether of his ministers themselves, or those to whom he sends them. What prophet was ever so thoroughly furnished to his work, as far as inspiration could furnish him, as the New Testament man of God?

But it will doubtless not escape recollection, that the ministry may misinterpret inspired Scripture; to meet which seeming argument against their being considered as “the voice of the Lord,” let me put you in mind, that neither did the ancient prophets fully comprehend some of their own inspired deliverances, but were left to discover, in the free exercise of their own fallible understandings, what, and what manner of time, the Spirit which was in them did signify, in his deep revelations to them concerning things to come. Inspired prophets, then, commenting upon their own oracles, might perhaps err, as the Christian ministry may and do, in their commentaries on inspired Scripture. But the prophets, notwithstanding the possibility of their misinterpreting some things, were the mouth of the Lord to mankind; and so, notwithstanding a like imperfection in our case, may be the regular preachers of the everlasting gospel. Take a distinction between the pure dictations of the Spirit, and our uninspired expositions and reasonings upon them, and understand us as extending the high ministrual communications, whether of prophets or preachers, not a hair-breadth beyond the former, and where is the arrogance or the ill-consequence in either

case of pronouncing these communications “the voice of the Lord.” If preachers speculate, and sometimes, perhaps, they may do even that to edification unless they seek to become wise above what is written, let them apprise the people that they are not then presuming to speak in the name of the Lord; as the prophet who told a dream, as a dream should have let it pass—let but this needful precaution be used by preachers, and let the people carefully make the forementioned distinction, and there will be no danger of their receiving as inspired doctrine the commandments and speculations of men.

Still, perhaps, some cannot but stand in doubt of this view of the ministerial function, as attaching to it a sacredness and a sanction unwarranted by observation. Among those who profess to exercise that function, there is a radical discordance both in doctrine and life: Some unquestionably are not the Lord’s mouth, and what sure proof is there that such sacred honor belongs to any of them? Now freely do we grant, nay, loudly protest, that there are indeed false teachers, bearing the name of Christian ministers, who privily and otherwise bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them; but is it not forgotten that there were false prophets of old, who made the people of God to err through their “lies” and their “lightness?” And if in the presence of many hundreds of such deceivers, one solitary Elias or Micaiah could stand forth and sound out a voice as convincingly the Lord’s, as if no counterfeit of that voice had ever been attempted, so may the regular ministry now on the stage, show credentials, no less clear, of a divine commission, in the midst of all the varieties of self-sent preachers on the face of the whole earth. Indeed, complaint on the ground now taken is as perverse, in this case, as it could be in any other, wherein genuine excellence



should be denied existence, merely because there are pretenders who say they have it, and have not. Real and apparent, genuine and spurious, are designations which men find occasions to use, in reference to almost every thing with which they have to do; and shall they, therefore, become universal skeptics? All things in this world are such and so evidenced, as to suit a state of trial; and if this be proof of divine wisdom and goodness on the general scale, why should not these attributes be recognized as displayed, particularly, in the plan of Providence concerning the ministration of God's saving counsel and grace?

But now while you yield to the conclusiveness of these observations, you are probably but the more solicitous to know THE MARKS OF THE TRUE MINISTRY, that you may be sure of not paying your personal attendance where "the voice" which "crieth" is not that of the Lord, but another.

How, while one saith, lo here, and another lo there, is many a poor wayfaring man to know whither he must go? Is his rustic ear acute enough to try this confusion of exclamations, and distinguish the heavenly cry amidst all the imitations of it which the father of lies hath been able to invent? Men of corrupt minds are often in great fear, where no fear is, and surely there is none here, although the show of danger be not small. Scorners and sectarists have led heady and heedless people into the apprehension of an insurmountable difficulty, which is, in fact, no difficulty at all. And who that is not utterly overpowered by the spirit of bigotry; can allow himself soberly to think, that God would give forth his compassionate voice for the guidance of benighted mortals in the way of life, and not make that voice intelligible even to the feeblest mind, in

defiance of all the great deceiver can do to drown or to mimic it? How can it be the opinion of any thoughtful mind, that unless a man be learned and logical enough to explore and sift the arguments for and against the claims of a certain denomination, to be considered as descending with its ministers in an unbroken succession, from the apostles; unless he can do all this, he cannot know, by sound conviction of his own understanding, but that he is the dupe of a false teacher, who, in the guise of a sheep, may be inwardly a ravenous wolf? In no such way did Christ instruct his disciples to satisfy themselves as to the true character of teachers professing to have been sent from God? He gave them a test, at once infallible, and so easy of application, that any unlearned man or child may use it, as will as a master of Israel. Not by their having the apostles at the beginning of their ministerial line—no, said He, who was even higher than the apostles, but “by their FRUITS ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” Here—I would think it no boldness to affirm, in the midst of the whole multitude of strivers for exclusive apostolic countenance—here, is the true criterion of ministerial pretensions. A minister exemplifying the heavenly spirit of Christ in his walk before the world, and in his doctrinal inculcations ever enforcing the pure and entire truth of the gospel, and thus striving to win souls and build up converts in their most holy faith—such a minister, of whatever Christian denomination, approved by his brethren and having a seal to his commission in the hearts, perhaps, of hundreds begotten, through his preaching, to holiness and heaven—is a minister of Christ, who hath entered by the door into the sheepfold, the porter having opened to him as a true shepherd of the sheep, however some may suspect that hands were laid upon him which wanted pure ordaining virtue. But, on the contrary, a minister who, by light-



ness of manners, or by lies in his preaching, causes God's people to err from the narrow way of the gospel; who, in the tendency of his life and ministrations, makes little distinction between the world and the saints, whether in present character or eternal destiny; who pleads against a strict, and in favor of an easy and fashionable religion; and who, instead of having a seal to his ministry in the hearts of the elect, has there a witness against him, whose complaining voice, day and night, enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth—such a minister, though of a church unquestionably the most apostolical in Christendom, is one against whom all heaven, if it might speak, would protest, and whom every one who cares for his soul, ought to shun, as a kid should shun the den of a hungry lion.

II. So evident it is that “the voice of the Lord” truly “crieth,” in the testimony of the Christian ministry; and so easy is it, to distinguish that voice amidst all evil attempts to assume or imitate it:—Now, the next thing which the text and the occasion of this service lead us to set forth in our discourse, is the infatuation of mankind in not discovering the name and majesty of God, through the medium of his voice lifted up and crying in our humble testimony. That this discovery is not made, except by a very small remnant, it were preposterous to dispute, while almost the whole world as evidently lieth in wickedness, at this day, as when the trumpet of the gospel was first sounded by the apostles. For such surely would not be the state of the world—they would not be slumbering so securely in the lethean arms of their sins, with the clouds of eternal wrath gathering and thundering about them, if they discerned in the simple cry of their preachers the presence of the almighty and uncontrollable will. No, they neither discern it, nor believe it to be there; but rather, in their deceived heart, if not with open clamor,

they scorn the very pretence that God is with his ministers, and speaks with their mouth—they supremely scorn it, as the consummation of arrogance or delusion. “Who,” say they, “are these that speak as if they were God himself, and were armed with celestial power? Do we not see that they are sinful mortals as well as we?” If any thing pertaining to the persons or circumstances of the ministry—their weakness, their poverty, their obscurity, their want of great learning and refinement, their having no connexion with courts, and no countenance from princes—if things like these seem appendages not likely to be found about the ministry of Him who covereth himself with light as with a garment, and stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and layeth the beams of his chambers in waters, and hath his way in the whirlwind and the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet—if any one think such a being would be ashamed of a ministry so mean as are the preachers of the gospel, then let him deny that God spake by Elias, and Amos, and other prophets of like personal disadvantages: and let him also justify the Jews in rejecting their Messiah, on these same grounds; and let him hold, moreover, that the fishermen of Galilee were not the holy apostles of the Lamb, but emissaries of Satan. If God would have ministers great and dignified enough to be worthy of their office, where, among all the sons of men or even his holy angels, could they be found? Should we measure the divine majesty by any personal exhibitions of grandeur in the power of archangels to make, we should limit and degrade the Holy One even to the depriving Him of his essential glory. Why then do we not acknowledge the wisdom of God in choosing representatives of Himself, whose personal appearance and character could never be thought of, as the medium of judging concerning His nature? Other obvious reasons there are, why the meanness of the ministry should be their recommenda-

tion; but these need not be mentioned: No "man of wisdom," none who is not smitten with the spirit of slumber, having eyes that he should not see, and ears that he should not hear, will fail to discern the excellency of the gospel, merely because we have that treasure in earthen vessels. No excuse for this insensibility to the majesty of God, can be derived from the manner in which that majesty reveals itself. If it should be revealed daily in voices directly from the skies, and amidst all the apparatus of terror which invested Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, while such a mode of disclosure would be wholly incongruous with God's good and wise purposes, and with the present state and circumstances of man, it needs no penetration to see that those ever-sounding voices would be as little likely to secure due acknowledgment, as the voice of nature ceaselessly proclaiming, in all her works and movements, the presence of her God. "The man of wisdom" will consider, not so much the medium by which "the Lord's voice crieth," as the evidences that the voice is truly that of the Lord; and when that is the fact, the evidences of it, most assuredly, cannot be justly weighed for a moment, without overwhelming the mind with conviction. For is it even supposable that God may speak and room be left to doubt as to the source of the utterance? Must there not be something in the very voice itself, marking it as impossible to have come, save from the mouth of the Lord? Can any creature speak like the Creator? A man is not so far above a brute as God is above the greatest of his creatures; and if a man's voice sound differently from a brute's, must God's be undistinguishable from a man's? Let all the voices in the whole creation cry, and after that the Lord's; shall He, before whom the whole creation itself is as the small dust of the balance, utter a voice so little wiser, greater, better, than every other, that it is hard to discern the difference? Compare God's workmanship to

that of a creature's. What pencil can paint, what hand can build like His? How coarse and clumsy seem the cunningest copies of art in the presence of His originals? And if the difference be so vast in what He DOES, shall it be almost undiscernable in what He SAYS? When the mind which contains the original conceptions of all the forms of beauty, and sublimity, and strength, and goodness, which are to be found in creation—when the fountain of all intelligence, opens His mouth, shall nothing be expressed beyond the power of a breathing atom to utter? What else were to be expected but that what ever is truly divine, whether it be deed or word, will bear the impress of divinity so clearly in itself, that it need but be considered in order to be known as wholly unlike what might come from a creature. So all likelihood leads us to conclude; and if any man on the earth will now candidly hearken to the voice of which we speak, he will find in this instance our conclusion confirmed: that is such a voice, that no ear is so dull but must confess it divine, unless resolved against a fair and submissive hearing. Think ye that the Christian ministry, whether of the present or any past generation, could of themselves have uttered such a voice? Could their narrow and sinful hearts have conceived such thoughts as that voice reveals? O could the tongue of men or angels, unless moved by the inspiration of God, have uttered, and uttered with an eloquence such as mortal ears never elsewhere heard, such high lessons of virtue and righteousness, such sublime conceptions of God and his works, such humiliating views of man and his state, such a scheme of grace, such histories, such proverbs, such parables, such psalms, such prophecies, as that marvellous voice repeats, of which ministers of the gospel are appointed to be the echo, from land to land, and age to age. But the height of human infatua-



tion will not be fully discovered without considering also the effects and achievements of that testimony which men so dishonor. If a voice should be uttered which should break the cedars of Lebanon, make Sirion to skip like a young unicorn, dry up rivers, set the mountains on fire, and melt down the ancient rocks, almost as much amazement would seize you to hear a man question whether that voice came from God, as to witness the proof of its stupendous efficiency; yet it is certain that even such a voice would not accomplish greater wonders than that hath done in which the world sees nothing to awaken their attention. It needs more than a mortal's tongue to tell, and more than a mortal's heart to understand, the number and excellency of the doings of this voice. It hath produced a new creation; a creation resplendent with the Maker's glory, in a far higher sense than was the outward world in the freshness of its being. It hath dispersed a worse than the primeval darkness, with a better than the primeval light. It hath built for ruined man a far fairer than his first habitation, and new-made him in the likeness of God, that he might be fitted to dwell in it; and scattering the powers of darkness before him, subduing hell and death under his feet, it hath brought him triumphantly to his new Paradise, and opened its everlasting gates for his admission, and in that bright world it hath enthroned him a king and a priest unto God, to reign and shine for ever as the sun in the firmament. To use plainer speech, it hath in unnumbered instances illumined poor man's benighted mind, melted his stony heart into tenderness and love, conquered and renewed his obstinate will, refined and sanctified his vile affections, broken him off from all manner of vicious habits, and established him in habits of the strictest purity, given him immortal hope for the gloom of despair, spoken his storms of trouble into peace, made great tribu-

lation the occasion to him of heavenly rejoicing, and changed for him the grave into the gate of heaven. Such have been and such are some of the actual and manifest effects of this voice: but what more might not be added? If there is any thing desirable in refinement of taste and manners, in learning and the arts, in liberty and peace, the praise of it will not be bestowed where it is most due, unless it be acknowledged as an incidental legitimate fruit of the same wondrous voice. How soon would our entire world be as a vast field of blood, where wickedness in every frightful form would raven without restraint, if the voice which speaks through the gospel ministry should be silent. And yet mankind see nothing of God in it, but for the most part hold it in less esteem, than many of the empty cries which they raise among themselves.

III. Now this in itself is an evil more deplorable than every other in the present lot of man; a strange evil truly; at the same time, the greatest of calamities and the greatest of sins; and yet what we are in the next place briefly to declare is, that bad as it is in itself, it draws after it worse consequences—consequences which it had been well for him who has to meet, that he never had been born. These consequences will teach the incorrigible despisers of our testimony what it is they hold in such contempt. It now appears to them as having nothing in it to be feared; they take liberties with it and find no hurt; they hear it or hear it not, as may suit their convenience or caprice: they mock at it; they gainsay it; they treat it in whatsoever manner they please, and yet it injures not a hair of their head. They sometimes do worse; seeking even to silence it, by stifling the breath that gives it expression. They lay their hands on the persons of the ministry, they scourge, they imprison, they kill them, they account them as sheep for the slaughter, and still what

harm do they suffer? So dealt the Jews with the prophets, the apostles, and the Prince of Life himself; and thousands of God's faithful witnesses have fared in like manner in subsequent times. If this voice be the Lord's why is it not proved to be his, by some instant stroke of divine anger on every one who offers it the least disrespect? The patience of God which bears so long with the world's blasphemies and crimes; the spirit of Jesus which restrained him from coming down from the cross to prove his Messiahship at the challenge of his murderers, is not less mysterious than that the miracle performed on Lot's wife is not repeated upon every one who in any way dishonours the gospel ministry. Could the judgment, however, of these disdainful men be now realized, no one would complain that it seemed to linger. As the voice of civil law which is treated as if it were without strength by successful robbers and ruffians, appears sufficiently powerful at the terrible moment of their shameful execution, so when the doom of these contemners of "the Lord's voice" has once overtaken them, that now unavenged voice, will convincingly show whose it is, by inflictions as demonstrative of an almighty hand, as the creation of the world. Time allows us not to enlarge here beyond one or two remarks. When the word of God came to the prophet Jeremiah, a man of like passions with ourselves, "See," it was said to him, "I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to plant and to build;" so tremendous was the strength that dwelt in a prophet's tongue: yet was it not equal to that with which Christ has armed the commissioned heralds of the gospel. "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;" "Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto



them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained;" "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that helieveth not shall be damned." O when the voice of the evangelical ministry shall be honoured by the full revelation of the power here given it by Christ, no creature will be left in doubt whether that voice be their own, or His who called the world out of nothing and it came. Then will be seen how truly Christ said, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

This also should be remembered, that the penalty of these despisers though not immediate, does not slumber for a moment; neither is it slack in its approach as some count slackness. It is coming, as directly as the arrow to its mark; and when arrived it will be thought that light itself is not so swift. Nor are there wanting tokens of its terribleness and its haste. For God, still rich in mercy, gives much warning to rebellious men; bringing forth the cloud of his indignation as from afar, with his lightning playing gently before it, that they may be without no inducement to make their escape from the fury of the coming storm. Since they contemptuously turn away their ears from his "voice," he lifts up his menacing "rod," to alarm them if possible out of their desperate stoutness. He visits them with corrective stripes: they are stricken, smitten, and afflicted in their minds, in their persons, in their families, in their connexions, in all their outward circumstances; others are struck with death for their admonition; child, lover, and friend, one, another, and then another, are known no more in the sphere of their social intercourse; and yet for all this his comminatory anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring

back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. But when these methods of correction have failed of their designed result, when men after proving their contempt on the voice of the Lord, refuse also to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it, God having endured these vessels of wrath, with so much long suffering will hasten to show his wrath and make his power known in their everlasting destruction.

But there is one way whereby God sometimes reveals his admonitive indignation against the refusers of his mercy, which though seldom so esteemed by them, is of all others by far the most dreadful in the view of the man of wisdom; and the event which has this day convened us makes it specially proper to mention it. It is when God withdraws his voice and appoints silence to instruct them: when he smites not them but his own ambassador; and calling his rejected witness home, leaves them only his grave and his dust to remind them of eternity. This is a kind of warning which almost no one lays to heart; and yet, in the way of reproof, what could the Lord do more than this, to strike the rock of impenitency into contrition?

It were most ungracious to insinuate that the recal of that very eminent man, who so long sounded out the "Lord's voice" from this place, should be regarded as a judgment upon the congregation; but this we may freely say, that every person, "man of wisdom," or otherwise, who was accustomed to hear the word at his mouth, should not be unexercised in deep thought and feeling, by that solemn act of a most deep meaning Providence. Especially does it concern those of you who though his testimony is ended, remain yet in your sins, to ponder this, to you surely, serious occurrence. How often have you heard from him as he was about closing a powerful argument against your unbelief, the tender premonition that his days were almost num-

bered: what he then said has come to pass; and how soberly does the fulfilment of his word in this instance warn you, that though heaven and earth may pass away, nothing that he ever spoke to you, "as the voice of the Lord," shall fail to be accomplished. He is not more certainly gone the way of all the earth, nor was it at all more certain that he would go, than that what he has often told you out of the Scriptures respecting the final doom of the wicked, will be fulfilled in yourselves, if you do not repent.

But, however his removal should be interpreted in respect to the flock of which he was specially the shepherd, it reads a lesson to the church and the community at large, which nothing but the stupidity reprehended in this discourse can misunderstand. When one of the first luminaries in our heaven disappears, shall the inhabitants of the land have no concern at the event? When Elias is taken up, shall the cry be nowhere heard, "My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." We shall not now venture to present a character of this great man; which, whoever attempts, should aim at an exactness of resemblance, such as when in water face answereth to face, lest, by being confronted with the very precise image which he has left of himself in your hearts, and in his works, it should be reprov'd as untrue to so rare a specimen of God's handiwork. Our remarks concerning him, will be such only as may be prompted by an endeavor to enforce the instruction afforded us by the Providence which has removed him.\*

\* It may be well to record in this place, the following biographical particulars concerning this distinguished man. He was born February 21st, 1769, at Lewes, in the state of Delaware. He was graduated in the University of Pennsylvania, in 1788. He was admitted to the bar, in Sussex county, Delaware, in 1790. He

While ministers of a certain class, possessing little intellectual furniture, besides a bare knowledge of the essential truths of the gospel, are, with warm spirits, with a most exemplary zeal, and with much success, constantly employed in applying those truths to the hearts of their fellow men, they are sometimes disposed to hold in too little esteem, the labors of those of their brethren, whose taste, learning, and sense of duty, incline them to deep research into the principles of things, to careful analysis of complex subjects, to critical investigation, and minute exegesis of the sacred text, to elaborate inquiry into ecclesiastical antiquities and the opinions and productions of early days, and to the knowledge and solution of all the most subtle objections that have at any time been urged by heretics and unbelievers, against the true Christian faith; as if without such vast labors at the fountains of wisdom, these less curious divines could have been supplied with some of those sweet streams, of which they are content to drink, without considering to whom next to God they are most indebted for the privilege. When our

was licensed to preach the gospel in 1804, and, in the same year, was ordained and installed as pastor over the united congregations of Lewes, Coolspring, and Indian river. In 1806, he was advised by the Presbytery of Lewes to accept the call of the First Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, to which he removed in the same year. In May, 1828, he removed to his farm, about 20 miles from Philadelphia, on account of the infirm state of his health; preaching, nevertheless, to his congregation frequently as his health permitted. His resignation of his pastoral charge was accepted in the spring of 1830. In the same season, he visited the city, and preached for the last time to his people. He triumphantly departed to heavenly rest, December 9th, 1830, at nine o'clock in the evening, and was buried on the following Monday (Dec. 13th) in a spot, selected by himself, in the grave-yard of the Neshamony church.

friend fell asleep. in what pulpit of this land, was a man to be found so enriched as himself, with the fruits of this patient, and, at this day, too unusual researches of mind? Our ears never listened to a preacher whose common discourses discovered as rich treasures of recondite learning. And what more surprised us than the extent and variety of his acquisitions, was the ease and simplicity, and nice exactness, with which, on all occasions, he used them. In proportion to the depth and difficulty of his subjects, his tongue was loosed and moved nimbly and trippingly, as in its favorite sphere, expressing the most subtle distinctions and discriminations of thought; pursuing the most refined and complicate argumentations; collating, criticising, paraphrasing, Scriptures hard to be understood; reciting out of ancient and uncommon books, historical testimonies, and statements of doctrine; without the assistance of notes, and yet with a fluent precision and perspicuity of language which no such assistance could have improved.

Another recollection of him, which deepens exceedingly our sense of the loss we sustain by his departure, is, that with his great elevation in other respects he united in a rare degree what transcends all other excellence, and is the highest proof of true greatness, a catholic and charitable spirit. We never knew one who scrutinized more severely the evidences of doctrine; and he was, consequently, when convinced, not liable to be soon shaken in mind; nor did he lightly esteem the truth which with so much diligence and honesty he had acquired, or think it unimportant that others should be ignorant of it, much less that they should pervert or falsify it. But his reading was too various, his observation too wide, his acquaintance with the history of theological strifes too ample, his persuasion too lively, that the differences among religious parties are



rather referable to a sectarian than a truth-seeking spirit, and while they anathematize one another, may be consistent with the existence, in some degree, of real piety in both, and their ultimate reconciliation in heaven—he was, in a word, too sound-minded and enlightened a man to be a fierce champion of an ecclesiastical shibboleth, or to eliminate those whom he might suspect of having no readiness in framing to pronounce it right. He was among the worthiest of those ministers in our own denomination, who, espousing no side in our debates about orthodoxy, are willing to let those debates proceed as long as they threaten no schism, but when that danger is seen, throw in their influence, as a balance wheel in a vast machine, whose movement, without such a regulator, would presently stop with a terrific crash and damage. Such was the spirit of this high-souled man; and who of us can consider the present state, might we not almost say, crisis, of affairs in our church, without sighing deeply in his spirit, that the voice which he could raise, were he now in the midst of us, is not to be heard again till time shall be no longer.

Nor was it merely in his high place as a minister of Christ that he singularly honored his Master: he was distinguished by simplicity as his disciple, not less than by gifts as his representative; and it is when these two exist in union, that they become worthy of admiration. What a charm is there in gifts when simplicity exercises them; and how venerable is simplicity when it invests illustrious gifts. Never have we seen the person, in whom simplicity dwelt in an equal degree. Whether in his public ministrations, or in private life, this great man was unassuming as a little child, claiming no distinctions above the plainest individuals, and appearing to be conscious of no superiority to them in understanding and knowledge.

And such exemplifications of the Spirit of Christ are not so common amongst us that we shall suffer little by this privation: How often does the church, not to say the world, concede reputation for greatness, where it is no sooner received than it becomes manifest there was a mistake, by the immediate taking on of stateliness which it occasions? Such a transcendent instance of the reverse of this weakness was not to be lowly rated by true judges of excellence, and by them at least the loss of it will not be unlamented. With such rare simplicity in such a man, it was unavoidable that other great virtues should be united: in two of which especially, he was almost excessive. How did justice, as beaming from his example, rebuke those inconsistent religionists, who, by their *pious*, would fain make atonement for their *dishonest* deeds; and how did his generosity, a kindred principle, put to shame those covetous professors who uphoard treasure for themselves, as if orphans and widows, and the children of want, had ceased from among men. Time fails us to speak of his other high excellencies; the strength and calmness of his feeling, his gravity and cheerfulness; his ease, pleasantness, and exhaustless resources in conversation; and his most exemplary manner of life in his family. We shall leave his defects to be reported by those who would remind us that human nature is imperfect; only begging them, if they censure his excitability, and his too great confinement at home, to imitate his nobleness in retraction; and to remember what an invalid he was for the last twenty years, how open his door ever stood to visiters, and what a good use he made of retirement.\* It being our purpose by these remarks to

\* Dr. Wilson's self-seclusion from company and society-meetings should not be imitated, at least to the extent to which he prac-



stir and strengthen in our minds a just sense of the dispensation which has taken him from us for ever, we choose rather to remember, to what a height of excellence he attained, than that he did not rise beyond it.

It does not alleviate the sadness of the event we deplore, that it occurred not unexpectedly, but by means

tised it, by the generality of ministers of the gospel: he had reasons for retirement peculiar to himself; but the best and most available kind of influence which a minister may exert, especially in a large city, is, for the most part, we think, that which prayer and intense study, rather than free intercourse with mankind, and abundant parochial visiting, are adapted to supply. With few exceptions, it may be questioned, whether ministers who are much abroad in the families of a city congregation, not to say in other social circles, do not receive more injury to themselves, in the loss of time, in discomposure of spirit, in dissipation of thought and feeling, than is compensated by any benefit, obtained or imparted, in such discursive modes of pastoral activity. Where, indeed, the private conversation of ministers with their people, is like Paul's preaching "from house to house,"—a succession of sermons addressed to individuals or families, unspeakable good may be both communicated and received, and ministerial usefulness and influence, and even power in the pulpit, be greatly promoted: But the gifts of ministers must be very peculiar, or there must be an extraordinary state of religious feeling in their congregations, to admit of regular parochial visitation being so conducted in such a city, for instance, as Philadelphia. At least, if much of this sort of work is indispensable to the success of the gospel, in our cities, there should be more than one minister to a church; for certain it is, that the character and frequency of public preaching, the attention to benevolent societies, the attendance on funerals, and the visitation of the sick, demanded of the ministers of city congregations, in this day of unusual excitement and action, make full requisition on all their time, and form a burden of effort which few men can long endure, without exhaustion and perhaps irreparable loss of health.

of a very lingering illness which slowly enfeebled his frame, until it could no longer perform the least function of life. On his own account indeed we rejoice that the days of his patient suffering are ended, but he had not yet numbered three-score years and ten, and the force of his mind was never greater than at the moment of his expiration.

He departed prematurely in the full strength of all his intellectual powers, and that disease should have so long interfered with the use of those powers before his hour came, only gave cause in a less degree for the same grief which his death more loudly calls for. But let us now cease from recollections of what we have lost, whether by the infirmity of his years, or the too soon completion of them, to secure in our breasts, if possible, an indelible stamp of the precious lesson of his dying conduct.

Having protracted his pastoral labors until his breath became almost too short for the purpose of continuous utterance, he reluctantly concluded, as he was wont to say to his friends, that his work for the church and his God was done, and all that remained for him now was to prepare for his change. And how seriously did he set himself to that most momentous of all the undertakings that mortal men are concerned with; choosing as the scene of it, a country retreat, and there amid the quiet, for which he always pined, ordering his conversation and reading, his prayers and meditations, with constant reference to the great event—whereby, while he established his own heart in the faith of the gospel, the hope of immortality, and confidence in the fullness of God's forgiving mercy, he became so instinct with these divine themes, that with the pen of a ready writer he indited for the edification of mankind a treatise on each of them. His favorite books

now were those of the most spiritual and heavenly strain; whereof the Saint's Rest of Baxter was almost always found with the Bible upon the stand beside him. Of that work especially he would speak in strong terms of commendation, at the same time remarking, "there is no book to be compared with the Bible, and if I might prefer one part of that blessed book before others, I would say, I love the Psalms the best; I can always find in them something more expressive of my feelings than my own language." At the last communion-service of the church within whose bounds he resided, which was but a little while before his death, he took part in the distribution of the sacred symbols, and in a manner which revealed his consciousness that he should never so officiate again—solemn from a sense of a near eternity and with a heart enlarged with the love of Christ and the hope of soon being with him—he addressed his fellow worshippers on the great things of their common faith, far beyond his strength. His soul henceforth spread her wings for the world of rest. He said to a friend, "I have a strange difficulty, and you will perhaps think strangely of it, I am at loss what to pray for"—and added, in a most solemn tone and with his eyes lifted to heaven, "God knows I am willing that whatever he pleases shall be done." His triumph too over the fear of death was complete. "I have," said he, "been looking the case between God and myself, over and over and over again; and though I see enough to justify God in casting me off a thousand times and more, my conviction of my interest in Christ is so firm, that I cannot make myself afraid; the only thing I fear is, that I have not fears enough." He remarked on the last Sabbath evening of his life, "I am almost home, and I thank God that I am—I went astray from him, but in his rich mercy he brought me back. I am unworthy of the least

of his mercies, and if I may lie down beside his footstool, or if he will even put me under it—I will take the very lowest place in heaven.” He needed some refreshment, and when the cup was handed to him, he took it and said, “O God bless this cup—I think I have a covenant right to it.” A few hours before he died, he asked a brother in the ministry to pray for him, and specified this petition, “Pray that God will do with me just as he pleases.” Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace! We mourn for him, but not on his own behalf. Such a life, and such a death, to those who believe the Scriptures, are equivalent to an assurance from heaven, that he now shares the beatitude of that holy world. We sorrow that he has left us, but not as those who have no hope. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who are asleep: For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord.”



THE  
PRIMITIVE GOVERNMENT  
OF  
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES,

FROM THE EARLIEST TESTIMONY OF FACTS; IN THE ORIGINAL  
WORDS OF THE ANCIENT WRITINGS, AND ESTABLISHED BY THE SACRED RECORDS.

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SECTION I.

*The ordinances and officers of the Gospel neither conventional, nor subsequent to inspiration.—Presbyter meant not different offices; but presbyter and bishop the same commission.—The fathers credible for facts, their opinions unimportant, their silence presumptive proof.—Barnabas and Hermas rejected. The testimony of Clement of Rome weighed.*

FORMS of civil government are conventional, except where the social compact has been excluded by the dictation of power, or perverted by the stratagems of fraud. But in the kingdom of Christ, laws, ordinances, and offices are all prescribed and adjusted with precision; innovation is disobedience; an unauthorised office is insubordination and rebellion. The commission and duties of the gospel-herald are spread upon the same pages of that word which he is to preach; that he may know his own obligations, and the people, how he is to be regarded. Offices erected in the church, after the removal of inspired men, are unlawful, whether in ancient or modern times. If such



offices can be justified on the conjectural ground of convenience, so may ordinances, and we may "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." Unity of design and operation, and especially the prevention of sinful competitions and disorder, justified presbyteries, in determining that one of their number should preside in their sessions, and in public worship. But for the ordination of a presbyter, or the ordination of any as lay presbyters, without apostolical precept or example, neither right nor power existed; and every such unscriptural office was and is merely void.

That no such commission under that dispensation whereof Christ was a minister, belongs to gospel times, will be conceded by those for whom I write; and that the commissions of apostle and evangelist, given by him after his resurrection, for the planting of the churches, being obviously temporary, have expired, may be at present also assumed. Our purpose is to show from facts, what permanent offices at first existed in every regularly constituted church; that we may ascertain whether the term *presbyter*, *πρεσβυτερος*, was, among the first Christians, understood to designate two offices, a preaching and ruling elder, or one only,—whether the epithet *ruling*, *προεστως*, was so far from importing subordination, that it was adopted to signify a presiding authority,—and whether becoming permanent at the close of the second century, this office, founded on mere expediency, was more usually expressed by the word *επισκοπος*, *bishop*, common before that period to all *elders*. If these things shall be made clear, the assumption of the existence of two offices, couched under the same term, and constituted by ordination, but deemed to be distinct merely because presbyters exercised a diversity of duties in their episcopal character,<sup>a</sup> will be evinced to be merely gratuitous and unsupported.

Although the opinions and practice of the fathers

<sup>a</sup> Phil. i, 1. Acts xx. 17—28. Heb. xiii. 17. 1Pet. v. 1.



can have not the least authority to establish any office or doctrine, any prerogative or duty, not taught or exemplified in the Sacred Scriptures, yet their understanding of the Scriptures, without superseding the duty of thinking for ourselves, is entitled to our respectful attention; and their testimony, where unperverted, may prove that an office or order was in use in their times; or their silence may, under circumstances, establish, as far as a negative is capable of proof, that none such was then in existence. Where the genuine work of a pious father represents a doctrine, or an office to have been common, when he wrote, his testimony is credible, that the thing, which he asserts, was at least the fact as far as *he* knew. But if the opinion of such father, or the practice of the church in his day, must be admitted as authoritatively obligatory, though not founded on the word of God, then indulgences can remove sin, and a wafer become the body of Christ! The utility of their testimony is compatible with the admission that most of the Christian fathers, of whose writings we have any more than fragments, have left melancholy proofs of weakness and error; the conflicting opinions also of councils, equally disprove their infallibility.

The meaning of a law is often discoverable from the first practice, which obtained under it. If the *ruling elders*, of which some modern divines have dreamed, were a grade of officers in every church, between preachers and deacons, such fact ought to appear in the early uninspired Christian writers. If it should not be discovered upon a fair investigation, the silence of antiquity will be conclusive against the existence of such an office. Those who inveigh against clerical aggrandizement, as a modern substitute for original simplicity, and denounce episcopal power as an unscriptural invasion of the privileges of the pastoral office, ought never to plead expediency, when they degrade the presbyterial, which is the only episcopal order, by reducing presbyters to the stand-

ing of deacons. The present appeal shall be to facts supported by undeniable testimony.

The ancient miserable production, by many ascribed to Barnabas, but deemed spurious by Eusebius, has not touched our subject. "The Pastor," supposed to have been written by Hermas, whom Paul mentions, was certainly not earlier than the middle of the second century. A translation only has survived; from this the non-existence of the intermediate order might be easily argued; but our proofs shall be drawn only from books of indisputable genuineness.

The excellent Clement, whose name Paul pronounced to be in the book of life, is by the voice of antiquity the author of a letter, which is the most, if not the only credible uninspired Christian production of the first century. Its caption purports a letter from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth; the contents are a persuasive and pious address, well designed to produce submission to the government of their elders, whom they had rejected. There is not a hint in the letter, either of an individual bishop, or of subordinate presbyters at Rome, Corinth, or elsewhere. Had there existed a superior officer at Corinth, this letter in defence of the presbyters must have recognized his authority; had there been lay elders, the total silence of the letter on that point is wholly unaccountable.

That the elders, mentioned in this epistle, are of the same order, appears continually: "Let the flock of Christ enjoy peace, with *its elders*, *πρεσβυτερων*, appointed over it:"<sup>b</sup> It is a shame that "the church of the Corinthians, on account of one or two individuals, should rise against *their elders*, *πρεσβυτερους*:"<sup>c</sup> "Our apostles knew from our Lord Jesus Christ, that contention would arise about the honor of the *oversight*, *επισκοπης*. On this account, having perfect foreknowledge, they constituted those before mentioned; and they appoint-

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 54.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. 47.

ed in succession, that when they should die, other approved men should accept that sacred office. That those should be ejected from their public ministrations, who were ordained by them, or afterwards by other excellent men with the consent of the whole church, and who have ministered blamelessly to the flock of Christ with humility, peacefulness, and intelligence, and with universal approbation for a long time, we think to be unjust. For it would be a great sin in us, if we should cast off those who have performed the functions of the *episcopate*, *επισκοπης*, blamelessly and holily. Blessed are those *elders*, *πρεσβυτεροι*, who have finished their course, who have obtained their complete and happy discharge, for they have no fears, lest any shall remove them from the place assigned as a mansion to them.”<sup>d</sup> These *elders* held the episcopate; were the bishops, presbyters, or leaders<sup>e</sup> of that church; were in every instance named in the plural, and, beyond all question, ranked in the highest order of the ordinary officers of a Christian church.

The original organization of churches is particularly shown.<sup>f</sup> The apostles, “preaching through regions and cities, *χωρας και πολεις*, set apart their first fruits, having proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons *εις επισκοπους και διακονους* of those who should believe.” Had the word *presbyters* been here substituted for bishops, lay-elders might have been alleged to have been comprehended; but the word is not here generic; nor can it be appellatively taken. The word *set-apart*, *καθεστανον*, fixes upon it an official sense. Also the expression *κατα χωρας και πολεις* evince that the presbyters in the *region of country*, and in the *cities*, the chorepiscopi and episcopi; were at the first of one grade, and the individuals of equal authority. The supposition that either a superior, or an intermediate grade of officers, is omitted in this enumeration, is not

<sup>d</sup> Chap. 44.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. 1. “*υπολασσομενοι τοις ηγουμενοις υμων.*”

<sup>f</sup> Chap. 42.

merely to charge the writer with a careless inattention to an important fact, but to impeach his veracity; for if the first converts were set apart to three orders, they were not to two, for a portion of them constituted a third. That his language was designedly exclusive, appears also from his justification of this apostolical two-fold distribution, by a passage in Isaiah; "I will constitute their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith."<sup>8</sup> Thus does this letter positively affirm to the church at Corinth, that their presbyters, whose government they had renounced, were all *bishops*, *επισκοπους*, both by apostolic ordination, and prophetic authority. Should any allege, that this prophecy was misunderstood, our argument is still safe, because the opinion of the writer is clear, and he must have given the officers of a Christian church, as they then existed. Thus nothing can be more evident than that this letter, which, above all other uninspired productions, is of the highest authority, and at the earliest period, being prior to the Revelation of John, does use *πρεσβυτερος* and *επισκοπος* for the same order and office, and allows them but one ordination only; and, as it is in the face of those lordly powers, which bishops afterwards claimed, *jure divino*, over presbyters; so it is a standing and perpetual testimony against those, who would degrade the office of the presbyter, to the mute ministrations of a modern *ruling elder*; which is but another name for a deacon, and in a large proportion of the American Presbyterian churches, (whose opinion on this point has been protected by all their successive forms of government,—his ordination, charge, authority, and duties being the same,) no other deacon exists.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah lx. 17. פקדו he renders *επισκοπους*, and גנשים *διακονους*.

## SECTION II.

*The testimony of the Scriptures being postponed, till the facts and primitive usage of the churches have been shown; the letter of Polycarp is examined. —According to Clement and Polycarp, at Rome, Corinth, Smyrna, and Philippi, no officer was superior to the presbyter, and no presbyter a layman.—Papias accords with the same representation, that a presbyter, appëllatively an elder, was the only ordinary teacher; and without a superior.*

AFTER the credible uninspired evidence of the first century, the testimonies of the second, may be condensed into three periods. In the first period are discovered, except forgeries, but two witnesses, Polycarp and Papias.

The venerable “apostolical presbyter” Polycarp, whose letter is common, derived his first religious knowledge from the apostles: and was “in the church at Smyrna,” probably, the *presiding* ἀποστολικῶς, presbyter, “bishop,” or angel.<sup>a</sup> This epistle, unquestionably genuine, was written to the church at Philippi, near the commencement of the second century, we suppose about A. D. 116, and more than fifty years before his martyrdom. Read publicly in the churches in Asia, so late as the fourth century,<sup>b</sup> it was too generally known, to be removed, or successfully interpolated; its simplicity too undisguised and evangelical, to encourage imitation.

A single letter from each of those apostolical men, Clement and Polycarp has rescued their testimonies from the frauds of designing ecclesiastics. The former was saved by a single copy. Had a genuine letter of the pious Ignatius, in like manner escaped, it would have confounded those Arian and Athanasian

<sup>a</sup> “ἀποστολικὸς πρεσβυτέρῳ.” — “ἀπο ἀποστόλων μαθητευθεὶς.”  
— “ἐν τῇ Σμυρνῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐπισκοπῳ.” Irenæus.

<sup>b</sup> — “usque hodie.” Hieronym.



productions, too credulously ascribed to him, and which are the corner-stone of that system, which partaking of the Jewish and Pagan hierarchies, is equally hostile both to the rights of God and man.

This precious relic of ancient times begins, in a manner altogether becoming the character of its excellent and pious author; "Polycarp and the presbyters with him, to the church of God dwelling at Philippi, mercy to you, and peace be multiplied from God Almighty, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour."<sup>c</sup> The omission of his official name, has been made an argument of superiority. He was neither an apostle, nor an evangelist. In a particular church, no office more elevated than that of a presbyter, has yet appeared. His silence, though precisely that, which might be expected from the saint, had he been even Patriarch or Archbishop, names then unknown in the Christian church, can never establish the existence of a non-entity. Neither the title angel nor *προεσβως*, if such he was, which is probable, nor any consequent duty or honor, rendered him more than a presbyter. Not a word have we yet found, nor shall we in this letter discover any thing, that bears even a semblance of a proof of any diversity of grade, in the ordinary preaching office, the possessor of which as yet, was indiscriminately denominated presbyter and bishop. The *συν αυτω, πρεσβυτεροι, presbyters with him*, may import equality, or locality; but it seems rather to denote a union, in design and action. If it be asked, why then was *his* name expressed? Because *he* wrote the letter, which is throughout in the first person singular. Thus Paul and Timotheus are joined in the introduction of the inspired letter to the same church; but the third verse is in the first person singular, and the letter was Paul's. This introduction can neither prove parity, nor disparity, in the office of Polycarp and the presbyters with him; yet it is not improbable, that his grace, talents, cha-

<sup>c</sup> Πολυκαρπος και οι συν αυτω πρεσβυτεροι, τη εκκλησια τῆ Θεοι τη παροικουση Φιλιπποις κ. τ. λ.



racter, seniority in office, and even their personal knowledge of him, may have conduced, with the fact that he composed the letter, to his naming himself in it to the Philippians. If Polycarp was the only elder, "who laboured in word and doctrine," and the other presbyters were laymen, ordained in the same, and that the only mode, to govern and rule; why were the deacons omitted? That such there were, appears from the letter itself. This omission of deacons and association of Polycarp with presbyters, is at least a probable foundation for the supposition that he was himself a presbyter, a name expressly given him in the writings of Irenæus who remembered him, but whose account of him, being later testimony, must be left for future examination. This probability corroborated by the circumstance that no ordinary preaching officer except the presbyter has appeared in any testimony prior to this period, is all that can reasonably be expected on the point. As every presbyter was hitherto a bishop, if any were laymen, they were of course, lay-bishops. If Polycarp was as we have supposed a *προεστως*, or *presiding* bishop, he had the only preaching office, and the highest standing then known in the church; unless any of the Evangelists yet survived, of which we know not any testimony. If he was the angel of the church of Smyrna, mentioned in the Apocalypse, as some imagine he was, it is fair to presume that he was of the same grade with the angels in the other Asiatic churches, who were consequently not superior to that of the presbyter or bishop; but if angel was a higher office, it was a wandering star, that has come and gone without leaving a trace behind. Every talent must render its account, and the personal influence of every *προεστως*, *presiding* elder, or bishop carried with it, its own responsibility. Neither Clement, nor Polycarp has recognised, either a superior authority, or an assignment of duty more arduous, in any one presbyter of a church, than in another. The latter mentions only presbyters and deacons at Philippi; Paul directs

only to bishops and deacons there.<sup>d</sup> Each naming two orders only, if Paul omitted presbyters and Polycarp bishops, the defect is equally unaccountable; but if they respectively wrote to the same class, by those different names, they were both consistent with the constant usage of those days; and the conclusion is inevitable, that at neither period were they laymen. The advice of Polycarp to the church at Philippi to be subject to the presbyters and deacons,<sup>e</sup> would have been a misdirection, if the bishops to whom Paul wrote were different persons, and then surviving. That some of them remained is probable, because Polycarp, as appears by this letter, was living at both periods, and survived the latter, we presume forty or fifty years. If the terms presbyter and bishop were promiscuously used to denote the same office, at the beginning of the second century, which is satisfactorily clear; such was that of Polycarp; and if those presbyters were laymen, it is evinced, contrary to all belief, that he was no other. But hitherto for the existence of a lay presbyter, we have found not a word, sentiment, or implication. His profession of sorrow on account of Valens, who had been "*made a presbyter*" with them at some period,<sup>f</sup> and afterwards lapsed into error, determines the word presbyter to its official, not an appellative meaning. The admission of the judicial authority of those presbyters over their co-presbyter Valens, is not merely a renunciation of authority in the writer, but a proof, that the cognizance of the

<sup>d</sup> Philipp. Ch. i. v. 1.

<sup>e</sup> ——"υποτασσομενους τοις πρεσβυτεροις και διακονοις.

<sup>f</sup> Three paragraphs are here supplied by the Latin translation, "Nimis contristatus sum pro Valente qui presbyter factus est aliquando apud vos, quod sic ignoret is locum, qui datus est ei," &c. How and by whom he had been made a presbyter is not shown. But *factus est* implies a passiveness on his part. He was probably *made a presbyter* by *imposition of hands*, [χειροθεσια] and the office having been *given* [datus] to him, [apud] *with* the Philippians, it was, we suppose by *election* [χειροτονια.] An argument, nevertheless, must not be founded upon the uncertain basis of a translation.

cause lay not in their *προεδρωσ*, *presiding* presbyter, if they had one. There is a mischievous tendency to personal conflicts and confusion, implied in the supposition, that one presbyter should be amenable to another as an individual officer in equal degree. The petition that he should not be treated as an *enemy*, is addressed to the presbyters as such; the power of the presbyters in council, or presbytery is therefore in this instance plainly implied. But if every member of the church at Philippi, should be understood to have been thus advised with respect to Valens, then the congregation, as such, was supposed to possess the power of censure and restoration. By neither interpretation is there the least possible ground, to imagine a disparity among presbyters, by a diversity of order, or a difference of ordinations.

Clement and Polycarp, were co-temporaries and survivors of the apostles; their representations are entitled to the highest credit, and deserve to be received, as unprejudiced exhibitions of apostolical practice, prior to the corruptions introduced by clerical ambition. Successors of, but not apostles; presbyters in confessed parity with their co-presbyters; exalted only by superior knowledge, grace, talents, usefulness, and humility; they must, we suppose, have *presided* in the churches at Rome and Smyrna, but merely as *προεδρωτες*. for other precedence in the officers of a church, does not as yet appear. Among presbyters, they have intimated no diversity of order, degree, ordination, or power. Every presbyter was, by his commission, equally *set over* and bound to *feed* and *govern* the flock.<sup>5</sup> Their authority was from the word of God. The apostles could transfer none from themselves; they delegated no power; as servants of Christ they selected those, who appeared to be best qualified to exercise the offices necessary in a church. By imposing

<sup>5</sup> *προσλαμβανος*, 1 Thess. v. 12. *ποιμαινειν*—εν ω (*ποιμνιω*) υμας το πνευμα το αγιον εθελο επισκοπους. Ac. xx. 17, 28.—ηγουμενοι. Heb. xii. 7.

their hands, no virtue proceeded from them; they prayed, that his spirit might rest upon the person, and gave in charge to the people the relation they should stand in to him, and the Holy Spirit confirmed by his gifts, the office thus derived from the head of the church. The ordainer could neither enlarge, nor abridge the power incident to the office. Whatever misconstructions of the presbyterial office, have obtained; it is, and always will be, the highest ordinary office in a Christian church; and no presbyter, who is officially such, can be less than a bishop and authorised to instruct, govern, administer ordinances, and ordain, at least, conjunctly with his co-presbyters of the same presbytery, or council. Not a single word, fact, or even circumstance has occurred in the testimony, prior to the year one hundred and sixteen, adverse to these positions. From all that can be collected from the letter of Polycarp, and also from that of Clement, there existed not at Rome, Corinth, Smyrna, Philippi or elsewhere, any office superior to that of presbyter, nor a presbyter inferior to the clerical office. No canonical, or re-ordination is heard of till long after this period. Thus far not a tittle of proof has appeared to justify either the opinion of those, who would elevate the *προεσβητες*, *ruling* elders, to a superior order; or of those, who would depress them to a grade inferior to that of the elders *who laboured in word and doctrine*. The practice of the four churches, concerned in the two letters mentioned, may be supposed to have afforded at that time, a fair sample of all others. What errors sprang up in the Christian societies after the period of this letter, and within the protracted life of this holy man, in relation to officers and government, must be deferred at present. The successful discrimination of changes forbids all anticipations, except what are in support of the genuineness and credibility of the evidence adduced. The account given of Polycarp by his church, if credible, is therefore of future consideration; and the testimonies of him by Irenæus, though deemed



a cotemporary, are at the distance of almost a century from the time, towards which our inquiries have been directed, and may perhaps appear, when examined, somewhat accommodated to later views and circumstances.

Papias, who flourished about the period of Polycarp's letter, has been called his companion; but resided at Hierapolis.<sup>h</sup> He wrote several books, which have perished: except a fragment, which may be translated thus: "I shall esteem it no labour to set in order before you, the things I have rightly learned from the elders, (*απαρα των πρεσβυτερων,*) and well remember, and shall confirm their truth by my explanations. For I am not, like the most, pleased with those, who say many things, but with such as teach the truth: nor with persons, who relate injunctions, which are unusual; but with such as speak those things, which were by the Lord delivered to faith, and which proceed from the truth itself. If, on any occasion, some one came who had been a companion with those of former times, (*αξεσβυτεροις,*) I inquired for the words of the elders (*αξεσβυτερων;*) what Andrew and what Peter might have said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James; or what John or Matthew, or what any other of the disciples, *μαθητων* of the Lord; and what things Aristion, and John the presbyter (*πρεσβυτερος,*) and the disciples (*μαθηται,*) of the Lord are teaching (*λεγουσι*). For the things which I received from books, did not so much profit me, as those from a voice living and present."<sup>i</sup>

Irenæus says, he was a hearer, (*ακουστης,*) of John the apostle: which appears doubtful from the fragment. Nicephorus accounts him to have lived an apostolic life. Eusebius deemed him a man of credulity, but of veracity; he has not only given the above quotation, but confirmed it, by asserting the existence, in his day, of two monuments at Ephesus, of John the

<sup>h</sup> Col. iv. 13.

<sup>i</sup> Euseb. lib. iii. c. 39. Nicephor. lib. iii. c. 20.

apostle and John the presbyter. He styles him the *bishop of Hierapolis*, εν ἱεραπολει—ἐπισκοπος.<sup>k</sup> The title of bishop given to men of the first and second centuries, by those of later times, is no argument of clerical disparity at the former period, when the word bore a different sense. This sophism is often played off, by presenting catalogues of ancient bishops made for a different purpose; its seeming force springing wholly from modern associations. That Papias was a bishop in the sense of Eusebius and Nicephorus is destitute of proof; he has discovered no regard to clerical titles, desirous only of the truth, and with a simplicity almost peculiar to the days of primitive purity, he denominates the apostles themselves but seniors *πρεσβυτεροι*, in the gospel. That this word was intended by him appellatively and that the apostles were consequently named without a title, appears from his attributing *πρεσβυτερος* to the younger John in its official sense to distinguish him from the beloved disciple. Eusebius, enforcing the same discrimination, denominates the apostle an evangelist *ευαγγελιστης*, the younger John a presbyter; the one being a preacher unto the world, the other a presbyter of a particular church, not a layman, for he was a teacher of Papias whom Eusebius styles bishop of Hierapolis.

Thus does it appear, that apostle, evangelist, presbyter, and for the same reason, bishop, were anciently used according to the forces of the terms, and also predicated respectively in their official senses. John was an apostle by commission, in his labours an evangelist, and an elder by age. The younger John was an elder, not, at least comparatively, in age, but by office. James was an apostle by his commission, appellatively an elder and bishop; it being expedient, that he should maintain a continued *oversight* in the church at Jerusalem. Timothy was by office an evangelist, yet was occupied for a time in the *oversight* of the church at Ephesus. Every officer in advanced

<sup>k</sup> Valesius, the annotator, supposes this to be an interpolation.



age was an elder; and every one, but the deacon, was a bishop. In the fragment of Papias, nothing appears contrary to the simplicity of the Scriptures; but whatever can be elicited from it, accords with the condition of the primitive churches in the first part of the second century. *Clement* in the first has decided in language, affirmative and exclusive, for *two offices* in a particular church; according to *Polycarp* and *Papias*, who are the only witnesses known to us, in the first part of the second century, *the offices were the same*. Every thing, therefore, hitherto, exhibits the office of *elder*, in a particular church, *as the only ordinary teacher*, equally without superiority and inferiority.

### SECTION III.

*The representations of Justin Martyr not only respectable for his learning and character, but disinterested.—The ruling elder προεσλωσ blesses the eucharistic elements, and the deacons carry them to the communicants.—This testimony is that of a martyr, given to the emperor, in behalf of christendom, and renewed in a second apology.—The προεσλωσ among the Ephori held the same grade, as the rest.—The letter of the church of Smyrna.—The fragments of Hegesippus.—The προεσλωσ or primus presbyter, was at an early period distinguished by the name επισκοπος at first common to all presbyters.*

DID there exist in the middle of the second century, more than two kinds of officers? or were elders then of different kinds? These must be our inquiries in this section. Polycarp was now in extreme old age; Irenæus, a youth; Athenagoras, Melito, and Theophilus of Antioch, commencing public life; and Justin Martyr, a Gentile, but Christian philosopher, standing but to fall in the front of the battle. He, our almost solitary witness for this period, received his Greek education at Alexandria, in Egypt, and was successively a Stoic, Peripatetic, and Platonist. Occupied in contemplation in a place of retirement near the shore of the sea, he was abruptly encountered, and effectually vanquished by an aged Christian. The interesting and ingenious arguments are detailed in his dialogue with Trypho. Left to his own reflections, favored with no other interview, wounded by the arrow of conviction, he sought and found his cure in Christianity, the only true philosophy. Mingling his old attachments with evangelic charity, he indulged the hope, that Socrates and others had also imbibed, at least, the spirit of the Gospel, in a humble degree.

Retaining the habit, he exhibited a singular spectacle, a philosopher bleeding in the cause of Christ.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> εν ρωμη φιλοσοφων και τοις λογοις και τριβιφ και τρισχηματι.—Photius, 303.

The opinions of one, never an ecclesiastic, must have been viewed with less prejudice. Familiar with men of science, the influence of his character on those in power, rendered him important to the suffering cause. His conversion we place at A. D. 132, and his martyrdom at 163, without danger of material error. In his dialogue he mentions his apology. The passage is found in that, which has been placed last, but was the first. This appeal to the understanding, and feelings of the discreet, but mistaken, Antoninus Pius, A. D. 140, whilst the blood of those, whom it defended, was flowing under a merciless persecution, procured a temporary respite.

In his description of public worship,<sup>b</sup> after mentioning prayers and the fraternal salutation, he says—“There is brought to him who presides over the brethren, τῷ προεστῶτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν, bread and a cup of water, and wine, and he, taking *them* offers up praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and renders thanks for these, his gifts. At the close of his petition and thanksgivings, all the people present say Amen; which, in the Hebrew language, signifies may it be so. And he who presides, having given thanks, εὐχαρισῶντος δε τοῦ προεστῶτος, and the whole assembly having expressed their assent, they who are called among us deacons, διακονοὶ, distribute the bread, and the wine and water, to each of those who are present, to partake of that which has been blessed. Also they carry to those who are not present.”

His birth in Samaria, the natural acumen of his understanding, his philosophical education at Alexandria, Christian instruction, through eight years, in provincial Asia, and religious associations at Rome, are pledges, that Justin knew the forms of Christian worship. His piety, character, and death, secure to his testimony the claim of indefectible veracity. The high ground which he assumed, as the advocate of

<sup>b</sup> 2 Apolog. 97. Oxford edition. 1 Apol. 127.

the whole proscribed church, before the Emperor and Senate of the civilized world, rendered every word a matter of life and death, and required absolute verity. Under all these appalling circumstances he testifies that two orders only officiated, a president, *προεστῶς*, who taught, prayed, and administered the eucharist, and deacons, who distributed the symbolical elements. Lay-elders are not named, but there is an express assignation to deacons of the work now thought by some to belong peculiarly and exclusively to them; a violent presumption that there were no such officers.

The same word *προεστῶς*, *ruling* elder, deemed the principal and almost solitary scriptural<sup>c</sup> proof of this lay order, is here the clerical character. If Paul meant by it a lay presbyter, it is strange that, in forty years from John's death, the ruling elder *προεστῶς* has become, throughout the church, the presiding officer in every charge—the mouth of the people unto God; and standing in the place of Jesus Christ, takes, blesses, and administers the memorials of his body and blood, devolving his own original employment, if a lay elder, upon deacons who had been *solemnly ordained*, to feed the poor.

If the “brethren” *ἀδελφῶν* over whom he presided were the people, his authority may be referred to his office as presbyter; if they were his co-presbyters, or bishops, for such existed in all the churches, and have appeared in those of Smyrna, of Philippi, Corinth, and Rome, he was that *primus inter pares*, who from necessity exists in all presbyteries, councils, assemblies, and other public bodies. Among presbyters the presidency rested not on ordination, but a voluntary concession, by reason of seniority, talents, grace, or influence. *Επισκοπος* is a word of stronger import: the *προεστῶς* far from having the oversight of his copresbyters, retained only the *first standing* in the same order. If according to those suppositions letters too zealously attributed to the venerable Ignatius, the *επισκοπος* had presided in every church, Justin must

<sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. v, 3. 17.

have known it, and used the term, or have been justly chargeable with misrepresentation. But the term, bishop, being equally applicable to every presbyter, as having the oversight of the flock, could not have distinguished the presiding bishop from his brethren, at whose head he had been placed by common consent, for reasons founded in utility. In the same apology, precious to the ancient Christians for its timely aid in a season of extreme suffering, it is again published to the world, that, “upon that, which is called the day of the Sun, there is an assembling together of all of the respective cities, or residing in the country; and the recollections of the apostles, and the writings of all the prophets are read, as long as time permits; when the reader has ceased, he who presides, ὁ προεστώς by a discourse, δια λόγου, admonishes and exhorts, to the imitation of things that are good. We then all rise up together, and offer prayer, and as already mentioned, when the prayer is ended, bread is brought, and wine and water. And he *who has the first place*, ὁ προεστώς, again prays and gives thanks, *according to his ability*, ὡς δυναμὶς αὐτῷ, and the people add their approbation, saying, Amen. And a distribution and delivery of the things, upon which thanks have been given, are made to all, and sent to those who are absent, by the deacons.”<sup>d</sup> He then speaks of the lifting of a collection for widows, orphans, prisoners, and strangers,—which is deposited παρα τῷ προεστῶτι, *with the president*.

Had error obtained in the former description of worship, Justin would probably have discovered it in his second effort. If a martyr for the truth, which he records, is not worthy of credit, sincerity can offer no higher pledge. He has a second time described the officers of a Christian church, employed in the most solemn act of public worship, the eucharist, and again he has said they were the προεστώς *scil.* πρεσβυτερος, *presiding elder*, and the διακονοι, *deacons*.

It were weakness to expect him to deny the exist-

<sup>d</sup> 2 Apolog. 99, Oxford edit. 1 Apol. 13, 12.



ence of lay presbyters, an order which had then never been named, or, as we suppose, thought of. The reader of the lessons may have been a copresbyter, or any well taught member of the Church. The presiding presbyter expounded and applied the lesson orally; his prayers were also unwritten, because "*according to his ability*;" and he alone administered the eucharist, the deacons distributing the symbols to the people. The word *προεστως* being a participle, and written without its noun, determines only an order, of which this person *stood first*. Every Christian knew *πρεσβυτερος*, *elder*, was intended; and other readers from the *force of the term*, must have understood, from its application to Archons and Ephori, that an order, ecclesiastic and peculiar to a single worshipping assembly was meant.

This history establishes the fact, that the *elder, who ruled*, *πρεσβυτερος προεστως*, was the same who laboured in word *κοπιων εν λογω*<sup>e</sup> and that *ruling* should be understood not of inferior duties, but of the presidency.

In the writings of Clement, and Polycarp, it has appeared, that a plurality of presbyters, or bishops, existed at Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, and Rome; and that these, with the deacons, were their only officers. In every regularly constituted church, the same orders appear, by the New Testament, to have been ordained. No instance has hitherto occurred of the erection of an office, or order, of higher authority, than that of presbyters, or bishops; nor does there as yet, appear among them any disparity. One only in every church was the *προεστως*, either designated by his copresbyters, or by the society. It would have been improper for Justin, in his description of the public eucharistic service, to have mentioned those pres-

<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17. Thus the Apostle Paul, also in 1 Thesal. v. 12, by the word *labouring τους κοπιωντας in the word, and set over, και προσταμενους*, the church at Thessalonica, and *admonishing them, και νουθετοντες*, evidently means the same persons and presbyters, as appears by the omission of the article after the conjunction, before the latter epithets.

byters, who, for the time present, acted no other part, than merely to partake with the people. Neither did the distinctive name describe, nor the work of him who presided, prove him to be of a superior order. Although *προεστως* was used among the Lacedæmonians, for one of the Ephori, yet they possessed an equality of power and grade. Annually elected by the people, they held the supreme authority, could summon before them, charge and pass judgment upon the king himself. The *προεστως* of the presbyters or bishops of a church, worshipping at the same time, in different places, in a city, was the nearest approach to diocesan episcopacy. Yet the term, by which he was distinguished from the other presbyters, being the very same that was used for the president of the moral censors of Sparta, who were of equal degree; and the term *προεστως*, by its own force, implying no more than the first place or station, and not a diversity in the kind of office, it was discovered by rising ambition, to be necessary to abandon the word, and adopt, as we shall soon find, the word *επισκοπος* when a further distinction was intended. Neither was the *προεστως* of the Ephori clothed with the power of a dictator; nor his colleagues in office reduced to the condition of subordinate, and merely dependent counsellors. In like manner the *προεστως* of presbyters was by no means vested with the sole power of ordaining and deciding, nor were his copresbyters in any church selected, merely to advise, or execute.

The letter of the church at Smyrna, descriptive of the death of Polycarp, if genuine, falls into the middle part of this century. Pionius, as appears by its postscript, obtained it by a *revelation* made to him by Polycarp, long after his death. It represents that the martyr had a *vision*, by which he was preadmonished of his martyrdom by fire; that he was apprehended on *Friday*, brought on an *ass* to the city; that he was accosted when coming to the place of suffering by a *voice from heaven*; that, by a *wonderful miracle*, the flame encompassed him in a hollow circle and his

body could not be burned, but afterwards was wounded, and was, when dead, consumed by fire; that an odour ascended *like frankincense and rich spices*; that being pierced with a lance, *a dove escaped*, and the blood *extinguished the fire*. The pious and venerable Polycarp, in extreme old age, suffered martyrdom about the middle of the second century. Of this no one doubts; and that many of the sorrowful circumstances of it, may have been embodied in this wondrous letter, is possible; but how much of it is true, must be submitted to every reader. Those who will compare that which is supposed to be the letter itself, with Eusebius, will see that even where he professes to give the words, he omits, interpolates, changes and mangles the letter, in a manner suited to destroy all confidence in the representations of Constantine's favored historian. The letter we believe, never mentions either the word presbyter or deacon. It purports to have been written by one church unto another, omitting the officers of both. In it the word bishop once occurs—*γενομένουσ επισκοπος τε τη εν Σμυρνη καθολικης εκκλησιας*. "Being a bishop of the Catholic church in Smyrna." That Polycarp was a presbyter, that every presbyter was a bishop, and that a plurality of this order existed in every church, have been shown. We have also already ventured the supposition that he was a *προεστως*, *presiding* presbyter. For president, the term bishop was soon after this, substituted. If *επισκοπος* be so taken in this letter, against which we confess the omission of the article to be no argument, the anticipation is fatal to the genuineness of that sentence, and thrown into the scale, renders still lighter the credibility of the whole letter.

The character of Hegesippus, a Jewish convert, who wrote five historical books, which have, except fragments, perished, has been doubted by many writers, catholic and protestant. Also the circumstance that these fragments, except an irrelevant sentence preserved by Photius, have been derived from Eusebius, and no doubt accommodated to the language of

his own times, renders his evidence of little weight. This historian introduces his quotation by *εν δισ δηλῶσι* <sup>f</sup> *in which he discovers*; and then, proceeding in his own words, he says, “going to Rome he,” Hegesippus, “feli in company with many bishops”—“and found them to hold the same doctrine.” That the church of Corinth remained orthodox, *εν τῷ ορθῷ λογῳ*, until the time of Primus’ acting as bishop, *επισκοπουντος*, in Corinth.—“Being in Rome I abode until the succession of Anicetus, whose deacon Eleutherus was; Soter succeeded Anicetus, and Eleutherus, Soter.”

“After James, the just, died, as his Lord had done, for the same word, Simon the son of Cleopas, his uncle, was chosen bishop, whom all preferred, because he was the Lord’s next kinsman.”<sup>g</sup>

The denominating presbyters, bishops, is unexceptionable, for such they were. That one of them presided in every church from the apostles’ days is equally certain. To reckon up the succession by these, was in no wise improper. But all these things fall far short of proving a diversity of office among presbyters, or a difference of order.

An apostle, as such, possessed powers and had duties to accomplish beyond those of a presiding presbyter. We ought not therefore to conclude, that, because the Scriptures have not mentioned the travels of James, all his labours were confined to Jerusalem. The numbers sometimes mentioned to be there, probably include visitants coming up to the feasts. There is no evidence of an extension of his authority over Judea, though the thing is possible; or that there were then different places of worship of Christians in Jerusalem. And if there had been, and he had exercised a general authority, it was that of an apostle. That the apostles should have successors in their ordinary powers, to teach, baptize, ordain, censure, &c., may be fairly inferred from the promise of Christ’s presence, which could only be divine, annexed to their

<sup>f</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. iv, ch. 22.

<sup>g</sup> Ibid, and Nicephor. Cal. lib. iv. c. 7.



commission. That these duties were to be performed by the presbyters, or bishops of every particular church, is capable of positive proof. That in every presbytery there came to be a president, is undeniable. But it remains to be proved that such officer received a second ordination, either by scriptural authority, or in the apostles' days; <sup>h</sup> or that the presbyters of a church were so ordained, as that one species of them was authorized to preach, and another restrained from the exercise of such power.

Having now passed the middle of the second century and found one kind only of elders, and these the only ministers of the word, we may infer that *such is the fair construction of the New Testament*, on the ordinary officers of the church. The innovations which we are soon to witness in their gradual progress, were unauthorized and consequently *mere nullities*. Though every denomination has on some point erred, and the original names of the officers have been often changed the providence of God has in every age preserved the two orders, and a legitimate administration. But if the outward forms had all perished, being only means to an end, and consequently of minor importance, the characteristics of his true church have remained, "*righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*"

<sup>h</sup> The *Apostolical constitutions* need no refutation. The *Apostolical traditions*, referred to by Hippolitus, we design to consider, when he arrives, in the first part of the third century.



## SECTION IV.

*Christianity was taught as philosophy by Tatian and his preceptor Justin, both laymen.—The letter of Vienne and Lyons, differently represented; Pothinus a presbyter, πρεσβυτης, and Irenæus the same.—Melito and Athenagoras professed the new philosophy, and Hermias wrote “The Discordance of Philosophers.”—Theophilus of Antioch speaks of no officer in the church.—Irenæus was a presbyter, at Lyons, hitherto there is no other higher ordination, or office.—The evidence given by Irenæus makes presbyter and bishop the same office, and that the succession from the apostles was by presbyters.*

That “destructive superstition” which Tacitus had pronounced almost repressed by the Neronian persecution, surviving also the edicts of his successors, obtained some respite in the last thirty years of the second century, the period assigned to this section. The philosophic Pliny had expressed a sentiment, too prevalent in the second century, that Christianity was a crime fit to be expiated by death. Entitled to no legal toleration, though sometimes screened by the ignorance or caprice of a Galleo, the profession could be avowed only at the hazard of life. The only possible motive to accept or exercise an office in the church, under such circumstances, must have been duty, not dignity; conscience, not interest. Paul had saved his life, by claiming to teach the Athenians the knowledge of their own God. Many, with more success than Socrates, taught, bearing no office among Christians, a philosophy deemed to have originated among barbarians. An appetite for saving knowledge values offices, as means subordinate to a higher end, the acquisition of truth. Every Christian applauds Justin, receiving, in the habit of a philosopher, the crown of martyrdom.

Tatian was his disciple, *ακροητης hearer*, says Irenæus, who charges him with apostacy<sup>a</sup> after the death of his patron. "An oration to the Greeks," is the only surviving production of Tatian. Written with elegance and point, and not far distant from orthodoxy, it pleases, but contains nothing that bears upon the present inquiry. He calls himself, in a philosophic sense, a *preacher of the truth*, *κηρυξα της αληθειας* (p. 64.) certainly neither as Noah nor Paul, of whom the same expression is used. After representing himself born among the Assyrians, and educated among the Greeks, he again says, that *he preached κηρυττειν*, professing to *know* God and his works. The good sense of the "Oration" is justly commended by Clement of Alexandria, and by Origen. Justin was a philosopher, not a presbyter; yet he taught: and Tatian, a *hearer* of Justin, preached, but as a layman. If laymen did, at this period, preach without censure,<sup>b</sup> it is not probable that there were presbyters restricted from a privilege so common.

Large fragments of a letter, purporting to have been written by the churches of Vienne, and Lyons, in Gaul, have been preserved by Eusebius and Nicephorus. It describes some most affecting scenes of sufferings, in the persecution which took place, it is said, in the 17th year of Mark Antonine, A. D. 177. There has been nothing found in the letter concerning our subject, except the mention of the offices of two of the martyrs. The first is of Sanctus, who is styled a deacon from Vienne, *διακονος απο Βιεννης*: the other of the venerable Pothinus, who died in his ninetieth year, in prison, from the abuse he received at his trial. He is said in the letter, according to Eusebius, to have been "*intrusted with the ministry of the episcopate in Lyons*," *ο την διακονιαν της επισκοπης εν λυγδυνω πεπιστευμενος*. Nicephorus has given the same portion of the letter, with more simplicity in these words: "*Pothinus, a minister of the*

<sup>a</sup> Iren. lib. i. Ch. 30. 31.—*αποστας της εκκλησιας*.

<sup>b</sup> Tertullian's complaint was afterwards,

church at Lyons,"—Ποθεινος δε ὁ διακονος τῆς λυγδυνων εκκλησι-  
ας." If Nicephorus wrote from the letter itself, the last is the truth; or if he compiled from Eusebius, his was probably still the original reading both of Eusebius and the letter; and the term διακονος may have been subsequently changed into διακονιαν, and επισκοπης inserted. We have shown, in a former section, that Eusebius was unfaithful in his quotations of ancient writings. That Pothinus was the προεστως, or *presiding* presbyter, and consequently a bishop of the church at Lyons, is very possible.<sup>c</sup> The church appears to have been small, and the cause of truth an object of hatred and contempt, in that region; it is, therefore, improbable that a diversity in orders, which, as yet, existed nowhere else, should have originated there. Also, Irenæus, who was a presbyter in the same place, will presently be found to have known no difference between presbyter and bishop. As there appears in this letter no order above that of presbyter, which hitherto always had the oversight, so we find no lay presbyters.

Melito of Sardis wrote, about A. D. 182, several works, the titles of which Eusebius has preserved, with a fragment of his Apology for what he calls the *new philosophy*, and an important catalogue of the books of the Old Testament. But there remains nothing from him on our subject.

Athenagoras is a writer who also falls within our present period. The proofs in support of his Apology for Christians, and of his Discourse on the Resurrection are few and modern; yet no one can read the book, and doubt its genuineness. The Apology, being directed to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, sufficiently determines its own date. Written to idolaters, its arguments

<sup>c</sup> Mons. Blondel (Apol. p. 23—32) has proved, that it was nine years after Irenæus had been placed in the chair, προποκαθηδρια, of Pothinus, a bishop and martyr, at Lyons, when he was represented in a letter written by that church to Eleutherius, as their brother and a presbyter of the church, ως πρεσβυτερον εκκλησιας.—Euseb. Lib. v. C. 4.

are as they should be, chiefly drawn from reason. This writer styles himself an Athenian,<sup>d</sup> and a philosopher, and the Apology speaks itself the work of a Christian, and well suited to its period. His arguments, in the discourse concerning the resurrection, are worthy of attention even in the present day. Of church officers, we have been able to find no mention in either of his productions.

The tract of Hermias, called the "Irrisio Gentium," or "Διασvergμος," which is more properly the *discordance* of philosophers, is of uncertain time, but very ancient; and is probably the genuine, though unsupported production of a Christian. The various opinions of the nature of the soul, the chief good, and our future condition, are well contrasted, and with great effect. It terminates abruptly, but not before it has well established the position with which it commenced, that "*The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.*" It touches not our subject.

There are three small books, written by Theophilus of Antioch to his friend Autolyucus, an idolater. The writer had been himself a heathen, and appears to have had much Greek learning. The first is a general defence of the nature and perfections of the true God, of his work of creation, and of the resurrection. The second is against idolatry, and the different opinions of philosophers; and compares the cosmogony of the poets with that of Moses. He speaks of the "Trinity (Τριάδος) of God, and of the Logos, and of wisdom." He says it was the Logos who appeared in Paradise; and though he describes him as an effect, yet represents him as being at the first *in God*. In the third, after vindicating Christians from aspersions, he compares the profane with the Scriptural chronology. There is no claim of an ecclesiastical office by the writer, nor even the mention of any

<sup>d</sup> Phillip Sidetes (apud Dodwell, p. 489) says, that he studied the Scriptures on purpose to confute them, but became convinced of their truth.



in either of the books. They bear all the marks of genuineness. His death has been placed at periods somewhat different, but the weight of probability seems to determine it to about the year of Christ 182, which is but two years later than the death of Marcus Aurelius, expressed in the end of his third book, as the last period of his chronological calculation.

Irenæus was a Greek of Asia Minor, for he remembered there to have seen, when a youth, the venerable Polycarp. He spent his advanced life in Gaul, at Lyons. That he was a presbyter, we learn from his own church. That he received any other ordination, or held any other office, there is no competent proof, nor have we found any evidence of such occurrence in his day. That he was a "disciple of Polycarp," and was "raised to the *episcopal* chair" upon the death of Pothinus, ought neither to be assumed, nor granted without evidence brought from the second century. That he died a martyr, has been often said, but gratuitously, because asserted too lately. His death may be placed with sufficient correctness, after many vain efforts at precision on the point, about the commencement of the third century. He wrote five books against the wild opinions of Valentinus, and other Gnostics. Of these a Latin version censured by different writers as feverish, faulty, and barbarous; and some Greek fragments, in Eusebius, Epiphanius, John Damascenus and Nicephorus, together with some portions of letters, yet remain. The moral endowments of this father were much greater than his intellectual. Under all disadvantages, the facts, so far as given from his own observation, are worthy of belief.

In a fragment of an epistle written to Florinus on the subject of the errors of Valentinus, and preserved by Eusebius, he says: "These doctrines, they who were presbyters before us, *οἱ προ ἡμῶν πρεσβυτεροι*, and who were the followers of the apostles, never delivered unto thee. If that blessed and apostolic presbyter Polycarp, had heard any such thing, &c. he would





should be assigned as a reason for the omission of titles, yet justice and truth required, that their offices in the church should have been fairly recognized, had different orders of preachers then existed.

Speaking of the unwillingness of the heretics to be bound, either by the Scriptures or by the traditions of the churches, he says: (lib. iii. c. 2, s. 2.) "When we appeal to that tradition which is from the apostles, and is preserved in the churches, through the successions of the presbyters, *per successiones presbyterorum*, they oppose traditions, saying, that they are wiser, not only than the presbyters, but even than the apostles." That by presbyters here, are meant officers, seems conclusively established by their successions. These were necessarily described by the successive *primi*, or *πρῶτοι*. In the next chapter he observes: "It is easy for all who wish to see the truth, to behold in every church the traditional doctrines of the apostles announced in all the world, and we can enumerate those, who by the apostles were ordained, *institutum sunt*, bishops, *episcopi*, in the churches, and the successors, (or successions,) of them, even to ourselves; who taught no such thing; nor did they know what is doted about by these. For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were teaching to higher proficients in secret, and without the knowledge of the rest, they would especially have delivered them to those to whom they committed the churches. For they earnestly desired that they should be perfect in all things, and irreprehensible, whom they were leaving as successors, delivering up their own place of government, *suum ipsorum locum magisterii tradentes*." The very same traditions and successions, here referred to bishops, were, in the next preceding chapter predicated expressly of presbyters. If, therefore, the passage in this chapter be taken alone, as it has sometimes been, and accounted "the testimony of Irenæus," it will, though true in the sense of the writer, speak what he never intended; at least, it will do so in the eyes of those who understand the term

bishop in their own modern acceptation. Those, therefore, whom later times have elevated into diocesan bishops, were, in the days of Irenæus, bishops only as they were presbyters. When enumerated in successions, because presiding presbyters in particular churches, they must have been ordained in the same manner as other presbyters; since there is no evidence that there was as yet any but one ordination of elders. To represent the *magisterium* which was given to officers, indifferently called presbyters and bishops, as an authority given to bishops over presbyters, is to adopt a conclusion without premises. To say that the *succession and mastership* affirmed by Irenæus of bishops, who were presbyters, are a proof, that bishops in the modern sense, were intended by him, is the *petitio principii*, or weakness of *begging the question*.

The frequent mention, made by this writer, of the uninterrupted successions in several of the principal churches, does not appear to have proceeded from his respect to the dignity, or even to the importance of such presidential authority in the respective particular churches, but from the certainty which he supposed to have been hereby attached to the traditional doctrines which he opposed to the heretics, against whom he wrote. The gift to Linus of *the public work of the episcopate*, or oversight, “*ἐπισκοπῆς λειτουργία*,”<sup>e</sup> being understood of the individual church at Rome, “*ἐκκλησία*,” expresses care and labor, not worldly honor. So Clement, who succeeded Linus, and Polycarp, mentioned under the same circumstances in this chapter thought. That Irenæus intended no superiority above presbyters is also clear; because he afterwards assigns the episcopate, in so many words, to presbyters. “It is proper,” says he, “to obey those presbyters, *eis presbyteris*, who are in the church, “*his*,” *these*, who have succession from the apostles, as we have shown; who with the succession of the episco-

<sup>e</sup> Lib. iii. C. 3. S. 2. 3.

pate, *qui cum episcopatus successione*, have received the sure gift of the truth, according to the will of the Father." <sup>f</sup> "Presbyters," it has been objected, may mean here, old men. But he contrasts *those presbyters*, with the heretical preachers, and speaks of them as *being in the church*, and having *succession from the apostles*, and with the succession of the episcopate, as having received the *gift of the truth*; that is, those sound doctrines, which are taught in the original churches. On all which accounts, they were to be obeyed, rather than the heretics, who had none of these things. "Such presbyters, *πρεσβυτερος*," he says in another place, "the church nourishes, concerning whom also the prophet says, 'I will give your princes, *αρχοντας*, in peace, and bishops, *επισκοπους* in righteousness.'" <sup>g</sup> The prophecy which he here introduces, in support of presbyters, expresses bishops. The succession from the apostles, which he sometimes affirms of bishops, <sup>h</sup> he also applied to presbyters: repeatedly thus discovering, that he accounted presbyters to be bishops, and bishops presbyters. When Irenæus therefore makes presbyters the successors of the apostles, and ascribes the episcopacy to presbyters, he may be considered a very positive, as well as competent witness to establish, that there were no preachers, after the apostles and evangelists, of an order higher than that of presbyters, nor any presbyters, of an inferior grade.

In another place he speaks of *bishops*, as of those to whom the apostles delivered the churches, "*episcopi quibus Apostoli tradiderunt ecclesias*," and says that "the church every where preaches the truth." <sup>i</sup> In the next paragraph he observes, that "They who leave (*relinquunt*) the preaching of the church, *praeconium ecclesiae*, accuse *arguunt* the holy presbyters of ignorance." The presbyters named in this passage are spoken of as the only preachers then in the church, as having had succession from the apostles, as being the bishops to whom the

<sup>f</sup> Lib. iv. C. 26. S. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Lib. iv. C. 33.

<sup>g</sup> Lib. iv. C. 26, S. 5.

<sup>i</sup> Lib. v. 20.



church was committed, and evidently the highest officers, at that period existing in the church. The writer is speaking of his own day, and in the present tense, and therefore excludes the fond conceit of those who imagine that Irenæus used the terms bishop and presbyter promiscuously, only of those, who lived before his day. It is plain that one preaching office only existed in this age. He mentions no preaching officer of his day either superior or inferior to a presbyter, and no class among presbyters who were not preachers. Neither do the works which remain of Irenæus, nor any other genuine writing in or before his time, appear to contain a solitary proof of any distinction in the office of presbyter.

One passage only have we found in Irenæus to present a semblance of variance with the promiscuous use of presbyter and bishop. "The bishops and presbyters who were from Ephesus, and other neighbouring cities, being convened at Miletus, because he," Paul, "was hastening to spend Pentecost at Jerusalem," &c.<sup>k</sup> In the history of "the Acts of the Apostles," the bishops only of a single "flock," or church are addressed, unless we suppose them placed over the whole Christian church. Consequently, they who are on that occasion called presbyters, are the same persons whom Paul denominates bishops. If the original of this inconsistent passage should ever emerge from darkness, and no article should follow the *καί* before *πρεσβυτεγων*, the identical persons were at the same time bishops and presbyters. This hearsay evidence, for a version is no more, of a distinction in the only preaching office, appears in a faulty, barbarous and miserable translation, the original of which, at the place, has been lost. It not only stands alone, and is at variance with every book and testimony before it, but it is diametrically opposed to all the numerous representations of Irenæus himself upon the same subject. And after all, if the distinction had been expressed by him,

<sup>k</sup> Lib. iii. c. 14.



and had been true, it could have furnished not even the idea of a lay presbyter.

That this passage in the translation falsely represents the mind of Irenæus, plainly appears; when he afterwards expressly affirms the office of presbyter to be the highest in the church. "They who have also been accredited as presbyters by many, but serve their own pleasures and have no fear of God, in their hearts, who treat others reproachfully and are puffed up with the loftiness of the principal seat, *et principalis concessionis tumore elati sunt*, and do evil in secret, and say no one sees us, shall be condemned by the Word." This language plainly represents, that the presbyterial office was the highest in the church. If the *πρωεστωτες* *presidents* of churches are here intended, which is probable, because he speaks of such in the persons of Soter, Victor and others, in the present catalogue of popes, yet they are in this place expressly called presbyters. The testimony of Irenæus is therefore upon the whole decisive, that in his day, the office of presbyters was one and undivided, and the highest in the Christian church; and consequently that no presbyters were laymen.

## SECTION V.

*Clemens Alexandrinus mentions, a πρώτη καθεδρία, first seat, in each presbytery, and although he mentions presbyters, bishops and deacons, yet he shows there were but two orders.—Tertullian supports Justin's description of a eucharist and proves an antistes or president in the presbytery of each church; calls this highest priest the bishop, and affirms his right to grant baptism.—He makes a succession of such bishops from the apostles in the first churches a test of the orthodox faith which the heretics could not furnish.*

No alteration appears in the offices of the church during the second century, unless with the change of *president*, προεστώς, for επισκοπος *bishop*, presbyters began to act by his appointment, or in his presence. Though not in writers hitherto examined, some traces of it are in the two assigned to this section; who lived in both centuries.

Titus Flavius Clemens is called Atheniensis because educated at Athens; Alexandrinus, because instructed in the catechetical school of Pantænus, and a presbyter of the church at Alexandria. The preceptor of Origin, Alexander of Jerusalem, and others, he lived till the reign of Alexander Severus. He wrote an *Admonition to the Greeks*, *The Pedagogue*, *Stromata*, and *What rich man can be saved?* He had a leaning to Gentile ethics, and the merit of works. On future punishments he is erroneous.

Church officers are mentioned incidentally; "For as much as we are shepherds, ποιμενες εσμεν, who govern προηγουμενοι, the churches, after the example of the good shepherd, and guard the sheep."<sup>a</sup> This pastoral office was that of the presbyter, for he was such. In strict accordance he speaks of the presbyter, as blessing with the imposition of hands. "Upon whom will the

<sup>a</sup> Pedagogue, Lib. i. p. 99.

presbyter, *πρεσβυτερος*, impose his hand, and whom will he bless?"<sup>b</sup> This ascription of blessing to presbyters supposes them of one kind and clerical.

After citing from the epistle of Paul ten passages of practical duties, suited to various classes, he observes; "numerous other precepts also, directed to select characters, have been written, in the sacred books, some to presbyters *πρεσβυτεροις*, some to bishops, and some to deacons, and others to widows."<sup>c</sup> If *presbyters* be not here taken appellatively, the language makes a threefold discrimination, presbyters, bishops and deacons. It is possible that the author, in these precepts given from the New Testament, follows the language of the epistle to Titus, in which the same order is named, presbyters and bishops. (Ch. i. 5. 6. 7.) That there were but two *orders*, (*διακοναι*) presbyters and deacons, he expressly and repeatedly shows; and that there was a *πρωτοκαθεδρια* or first seat, in each presbytery, he also asserts; the meaning therefore of the passage is obvious.

If from the circumstance, that this writer never enumerated deacons before presbyters, because an inferior order, it may be fairly inferred, that the collocation of bishops after presbyters, in this sentence, evinces no inferiority in presbyters, we may be permitted to argue from the same circumstance, that he had no idea that presbyters were mere laymen. Whether, in this passage, *πρεσβυτεροις* was intended only of those who presided over the rest of the bishops, or *vice versa*, lay presbyters are equally, and wholly omitted.

In the numerous precepts addressed by the Scriptures to various characters, neither this author nor any other, has ever found a charge directed to lay presbyters.

Writing of marriage, he decides, that each man should be "the husband of one wife, whether he

<sup>b</sup> Pedagogue, Lib. iii. p. 248.

<sup>c</sup> Pedagogue, Lib. iii. p. 264.

be a presbyter, or a deacon, &c." *καὶ πρεσβυτερος η, καὶ διακονος.*<sup>d</sup>

The word presbyter being substituted in this direction, for bishop, used in Paul's epistle,<sup>e</sup> and by himself in two other references to the same duty,<sup>f</sup> proves that Clement understood the same by bishop and presbyter, and could not have intended an inferior, or lay elder. And if the promiscuous use of bishop and presbyter can demonstrate a parity in the clerical, it must be equally effectual to exclude an inferior order.

In another place he observes; "That man is in fact a presbyter, *πρεσβυτερος*, of the church and a true minister, *διακονος*, of the counsel of God, who practices and teaches the things of the Lord; deemed righteous, not because ordained of men nor because a presbyter, but because a righteous man, he is numbered in the presbytery. And if here on earth he be not honoured with the first seat, *πρωτοκαθεδρα μη τιμηθη* he shall sit down on the twenty four thrones, judging the people, as John represents it in the Apocalypse."<sup>g</sup> This writer does not distinguish the presiding presbyter by the name *προεστως*, the word *επισκοπος* having begun to take its place, nevertheless the *first* implied other seats of the presbyters; and the *first seat* on a bench of presbyters is occupied by a presbyter, with no less certainty than the last. This president called *προεστως* in the New Testament, is henceforth denominated *επισκοπος* without any authorised diversity in order. In the same page, he says; "Seeing that in the church, there are promotions of bishops, presbyters, deacons, *προκοπαι επισκοπων πρεσβυτερων διακονων*, I suppose they are semblances of angelic glory, and of that economy which, the Scriptures say, awaits those, who live after the example of the apostles, in the perfection of righteousness, according to the gospel. These, the apostle writes, being raised up in the clouds, *διακονησειν*, attend as deacons at the first; afterwards they are associated with the pres-

<sup>d</sup> Strom. Lib. iii. 464.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Strom. 459. 472.

<sup>g</sup> Strom. Lib. vi. p. 667.

bytery, *πρεσβυτεριον*, according to their proficiency *προκοπην*, in glory; for glory rises above glory, until they shall increase *to a perfect man*.

<sup>h</sup> This writer thought that the Saviour preached the gospel to departed spirits in hell: and believed, that future punishments were restorative. To the same hypothesis may be attributed his opinion of the value of the righteousness of the saints, both in this world and in the next, which is here described as measuring their *proficiency* in glory. His first comparison of the orders in the church, is unto those of the angels, of whom it has been remarked, there are but two, archangels and angels. He supposes also a discrimination in the next world between the glory of deacons, and of the presbytery. But although he names bishops, presbyters, and deacons on earth distinctly, he considered bishops and presbyters, as constituting the same presbytery, not differing in order; otherwise his comparison has failed. Deacons are here also represented as entering into the presbytery, without an intermediate order. Clemens has consequently assigned no place to lay elders, either in the church militant, or triumphant. Having spoken of an instructive, and an obedi- ential service, he says; "In like manner also with respect to the church, the presbyters maintain the part which renders men better, *βελτιωτικην εικονα*, and the deacons the obedi- ential, *επηγετικην*. Both these offices, *ταντας αμφω τας διακονιας*, do the angels perform to God, according to the economy of earthly things."<sup>i</sup> Thus again he expressly describes two, and but two orders in the church, presbyters and deacons; the former *to make men better*, the latter to aid in a subordinate department.

In this author we find a presbytery and deacons only, which is as forcible an exclusion of a third order, whether superior or intermediate, as can be reasonably

<sup>h</sup> Strom. Lib. vi. p. 667.

<sup>i</sup> Strom. Lib. vii. p. 700. Some render *βελτιωτικην*, *dignified*, others "quæ facit meliores."



expected from a writer who had no knowledge of a third.

In his "*What rich man can be saved?*"<sup>k</sup> Clemens relates that John the Apostle, observing a young man and turning to the bishop who presided over all, *ἐπι πασι τῷ καθ' ἐσθλῶτι προβλεψας επισκοπῶ*, committed him to his care in the presence of the church, *ἐπι τῆς ἐκκλησίας*, who received him *του δεχομενου*. John is then said to have returned, after repeating the charge, to Ephesus. And the presbyter taking home, *ὁ δε πρεσβυτερος αναλαβων οικιαδε*, the young man that had been committed to his care, nourished, educated, and lost him. Here we have Clemens, no doubt in the language of his day, as it had been in that of the apostles, expressly denominating the same person both a *bishop* and a *presbyter*. Also John, returning, is represented to have addressed him as a bishop, "*ὦ επισκοπε; return to us your deposit.*" It thus appears, that a successor of the last apostle, and by John himself styled a *bishop*, was notwithstanding a *presbyter*.

The sum of the testimony of Clemens, the most learned Christian in his age, is that there was one order only of officers in the church, above that of the deacons. He has not only not named subordinate, or lay presbyters, but has in the enumerations and descriptions, excluded the possibility of the existence of such an order in his day.

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, was born at Carthage, of a Roman family; his father being a centurion under a pro-consul of Africa. Educated in the learning of the Greeks and Romans, and becoming a Christian before the close of the second century, he flourished chiefly in the third, and preached at Carthage many years. Offended at the unkind treatment, or at the irregularities of the orthodox, he preferred the severities of the Montanists. His language is harsh and obscene. Speaking in his apology of the worship of Christian assemblies, he observes; "Ap-

<sup>k</sup> Ch. xlii. p. 87.

proved elders preside, who have obtained that honor, not by price, but by the evidence of their fitness.”<sup>1</sup> Aged men, as such never presided in the church. Also these are expressed to have obtained their standing by testimony, and were consequently chosen. We have seen in Justin, that the eucharist was dispensed by the *προεστως*, *presiding* presbyter. The same practice, though not mentioned by Clement, is recognised by Tertullian, his cotemporary. “We never take from the hand of others,” says he, “than presidents, *de aliorum manu quam presidentium*, the sacrament of the eucharist, commanded by the Lord, in the time of his life, to all, even the nightly assemblies.”<sup>m</sup> In the same chapter, he has used the Latin word, *antistes* which exactly corresponds to *προεστως*; “Being about to go to the water, but a little before it, we testify in the church, *in the presence of the president, sub antistitis manu*, that we renounce the devil, and his pomp and angels.” That the names, *προεστως*, *προισταμενος*, *præses* and *antistes*, which had been used for the first presbyter from the apostolic age, began to give place to the word *επισκοπος*, *episcopus*, or bishop, is established by his exclusive assignation of the exercise of the power last mentioned, to the bishop of every congregation in the following passage.<sup>n</sup> “The highest presbyter, who is the bishop, *summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus*, has the right of granting baptism, afterwards the presbyters and deacons, *dehinc presbyteri et diaconi*, nevertheless, not without the authority of the bishop, for the honor of the church, which being preserved, its peace is secure; otherwise the right is also with the laymen.” The highest implies inferiors of the same kind. These were the presbyters, because no others had existed at this period, in any Christian church. That this diversity sprang, not from any original difference in order or office, is evident; because Tertullian expressly founds the superior

<sup>1</sup> “Præsident probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio sed testimonio adepti.”—*Apol.* c. 39.

<sup>m</sup> De Corona, chap. 3, p. 341.

<sup>n</sup> Opera Tertulliani à Semler, vol. iv. p. 203.

authority of bishops, upon its necessity to the preservation of the honour and peace of the church, and not upon any scriptural or apostolical ordination or appointment. Here are no lay-presbyters; yet the expediency alleged for degrading presbyters by a transfer of a part of their original authority to a presiding presbyter, bears some affinity to that, which is now made the excuse for conferring on elders the place and station of deacons in the church. The terms, "*next the presbyters and deacons,*" imply that baptism was not originally proper, only to the *presiding elder*; but the peace of the church appears to have been disturbed by the rivalship of presbyters, whose power of baptizing had been made an engine of raising adherents, and promoting divisions. The peace of the church required that it should be under the direction of the presbytery in every congregation, and be performed by the presiding presbyter, or by some other for him. If the original power of these presbyters, which expediency only suspended, authorized their administration of ordinances, they were not lay elders. The implied concession of a power in deacons to do the same things, and the position, that the right existed in laymen, show, not merely that, had there been lay-presbyters, they might have baptized, but that the presbyters spoken of, were not laymen.

He expresses his opinion, "That the authority of the church appointed, *constituit*, the difference between the order and the people, *inter ordinem et plebem.*"<sup>o</sup> But that authority he must have understood to have been exercised in the days of the apostles; for he challenges the heretics to prove their doctrine by uninterrupted tradition, through successive bishops from the apostles; by which bishops, and the other presbyters, he must have meant *the order* of which he has spoken in the singular. "Let them show the commencements of their churches—let them tell the series of their bishops, so descending by succession from the beginning,

o Opera Tertulliani à Semler, vol. iii. p. 119.

that the first bishop shall have had some author or predecessor from the apostles, or apostolic men, who continued constantly with the apostles; for in this manner the apostolic churches deduced their own genealogies; thus the church of Smyrna, having Polycarp, relate that he was located there by John; thus the church of Rome, having Clement, put forth that he was ordained by Peter; in the same manner, also, other churches present those whom, placed in the episcopacy by the apostles, they account the propagators of the apostolic cion."P The originality of doctrines was to be proved by that of the churches; and this could be shown by the successions of the presiding officers.

The preservation of the names and successions of all the presbyters for a century, might have been impracticable; yet the strength of the argument for the sameness of doctrines, chiefly depended upon this circumstance, that the presbytery of each church, at any given period, secured the orthodoxy of each successive *προεσως*, *presiding*, presbyter, whom Tertullian denominates bishop.

Inveighing against the irregularities of the heretics, he observes, "One is the bishop to day, to-morrow, another, *alius hodie episcopus, cras alius*; to day he is a deacon, who is a reader to-morrow, *hodie diaconus, qui cras lector*; to-day a presbyter, who is a layman to-morrow, *hodie presbyter, qui cras laicus*; for they also impose sacerdotal functions on the laity." Individual assemblies are here the allusion, as in all other parts of his writings; if one to-day acted as the bishop in public worship, and to-morrow another, it must have been intended of one man's leading in the ordinances on one day, and another on the next, which is no more than the office of the *προεσως*, *president*; except that with heretics, the duty belonged to no one permanently. This passage also proves, that reading was no part of the deacon's office; that elders were not laymen; and that



the latter ought not to have performed clerical duties in the church.

When arguing the truth of the common doctrines against Marcion, from their priority, after mentioning the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, *Ephesus* and Rome, he observes, "we have also the churches nourished, *alumnas*, of John; for if Marcion rejects also his Apocalypse, nevertheless, the series of the bishops, *ordo tamen episcoporum*, reckoned up to their commencement, will stand upon John their founder. In the same manner also, the genuineness of the other churches is recognized." The enumerations of the presiding presbyters, which have formerly occurred, render this passage perfectly clear, and vastly different from the modern import of the phrase *order of bishops*. He sometimes also means by *ordo*, the bench of presbyters which sat in every organized church. "*Ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est concessus*, where there is not a presbytery, *offers et tingis*, you administer the eucharist, and baptize, &c."<sup>q</sup> This is the plain testimony of Tertullian,<sup>r</sup> that there was but one kind of ecclesiastics in every church, who were called an *order*, because they sat in a row; of these there was one, who by custom, from the apostle's days, presided; and the series of such presidents, up to the apostles, was also denominated the *order of the bishops* of that particular congregation; but we have not found a word concerning lay-presbyters, in all his writings.

<sup>q</sup> *Ib.* vol. iii. p. 119.

<sup>r</sup> The piece on the *Trinity* appearing among the works ascribed to Tertullian, has been referred by Jerom to Novatian, who lived until about the middle of the third century. In like manner the treatise on *Jewish meats*, among the works of Tertullian, is ascribed to Novatian; and also the 30th letter in the works of Cyprian. Neither Novatian nor Hilary, the deacon, are accounted authors, their writings having been incorrectly assigned to others.



## SECTION VI.

*Ignatius wrote epistles; the Latin are given up, and the larger Greek generally: the smaller are liable to many objections.—They sustain not the character given by Polycarp, were opposed to Arianism, which was long after his day; differ in style; were written when the government was parochial episcopacy.—The word επισκοπος had not been substituted for πρεσβυτερος in the days of the martyr, as these letters represent.—The writer's principal object was to enhance the power of parochial bishops, which had not commenced then.—They argue he saw Christ, which would make him too old in 116 to have walked and acted as described.—There is mention of an error, which arose long after his martyrdom.—Their description of the church as Catholic, the worship as at an altar, and in a temple, and the bread as if transubstantiated, are arguments against them.—Other objections.*

THAT Ignatius was sentenced by Trajan, whilst at Antioch on his way to the East, in his fourth year, A. D. 116, to be carried to Rome, and there given to wild beasts, which was accordingly done, is sufficiently certain. The account of his martyrdom, which has been defended as ancient and authentic, disagrees with the relation Eusebius has given of his progress to Rome. The former declares that he sailed from Seleucia to Smyrna, thence to Troas, and from thence to Neapolis. The latter relates that he passed through Asia, and confirmed the congregations throughout every city where he came, preaching the word of God, &c. Whoever compares the seven larger Greek epistles which bear the name of Ignatius, with the account which Eusebius has given of the epistles of that apostolic father, will find such an agreement as will establish a strong probability that they are the same. Yet this argument is nearly the same in favor of the smaller which are chiefly preferred. The Latin epistles, and the larger Greek ones, are now generally, if not universally given up. The larger epistles are

evidently tinctured with Arian opinions, which Eusebius held. His approbation of the epistles which he had, is some evidence that they were the larger ones. The question is, whether those letters, which Eusebius saw, were genuine epistles of that martyr. If the larger be claimed, their Arianism militates against their genuineness; if the smaller, their opposition to that doctrine must equally prove them supposititious. The writings of twelve Christian fathers, all born after the death of Ignatius, and dead before the birth of Eusebius, have reached our times. Clemens Romanus died before Ignatius; Polycarp survived him long. His letter to the Philippians appears perfectly in character for that excellent man, and entirely consistent with the circumstances of his day, and the condition of the churches. That letter does mention letters of Ignatius, but except the message to the people of Antioch, the description of their contents by Polycarp, as those "from which the *Philippians* would be able to derive great advantage, as containing faith and patience, and all that edification which brings us to our Lord,"<sup>a</sup> is greatly different from the tenor of those which are now offered to the world.

That which purports to have been written to Polycarp differs in style, but accords with the strain of the other six, the obvious design and the main scope of which, were to enhance clerical authority and popular subjugation; evils of a date long after the days of Ignatius. Speaking to the people through Polycarp, he is made to say, "Attend unto the bishop, that God may also to you; my soul for theirs, who shall be subject to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons."<sup>b</sup> We should have expected from the venerable martyr, on

<sup>a</sup> Ἐξ ὧν μεγάλα ἀφελθῆναι δυνήσασθε. Περιεχουσι γὰρ πίστιν καὶ ὑπομονὴν, καὶ πᾶσαν οἰκδομὴν τὴν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἀνηκουσαν.

<sup>b</sup> § 6. Τῷ ἐπισκοπῷ προσεχέτε, ἵνα καὶ ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν, Ἀντιφύχον ἐγὼ τῶν ὑποτάσσουμένων τῷ ἐπισκοπῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ διακονοῖς. In the larger epistle it is πρεσβυτέρια καὶ διακονοῖς. The Latin translator has rendered Ἀντιφύχον *inanimis*, but that is the force of the word ὁμοφύχος. The English translation has, "My soul be for theirs," &c.

his way to the amphitheatre, where he was to be eaten by wild beasts, that he should have breathed far other language. Eusebius has mentioned a quotation by Irenæus of a sentiment, which is found in the letter supposed to have been written by Ignatius to the Romans.<sup>c</sup> Irenæus mentions not the name of Ignatius, but says: "As one of ours, adjudged to wild beasts for his testimony unto God, said." Irenæus's book was written more than a hundred years, and the expression of Ignatius, as spoken or written, two hundred before the time when Eusebius wrote. This was probably the evidence by *which* this credulous historian received those letters. If he had had other proofs, he would probably have given them. But there existed prior to his day, in the writings of Origen also a proof, which extends further than the passage in Irenæus, inasmuch as it both mentions the name of Ignatius, and gives a sentiment which is found in that epistle, which is directed to the Ephesians.<sup>d</sup> Thus Irenæus and Origen in these scanty references to the venerable martyr Ignatius, furnished, as far as we know, all the foundation upon which those seven epistles, which may have existed in the days of Eusebius, could have then claimed to be those mentioned by Polycarp.<sup>e</sup> If false men have produced

<sup>c</sup> § 4. Σίλος εἰμι τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ δὲ ὀδόντων θηρίων ἀληθόμεαι ἵνα καθαρὸς ἀρτός (Θεοῦ, in the larger epistle) εὐρεθῶ (τοῦ χριστοῦ is not in Irenæus. *I am God's grain, and am (now to be) ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be proved to be the pure bread (of Christ.)*)

<sup>d</sup> Καὶ, ἐλαθεθε τον αρχοντα του αιωνος τουτου η παρθενια Μαρίας, &c. (6th hom. on Luke, Compar. with Ep. ad Ephes. § 19.) And the virginity of Mary was hidden from the ruler of this world. Also Origen quoted the words, Ὁ εἶμος ἐρως ἑσταυρωταί. Ad. Rom. § 7.

<sup>e</sup> Feeble as this evidence is, which establishes no more than that, if a forgery, it was committed prior to the time in which Eusebius wrote his Ecclesiastical History. It might pass unsuspected, if the strain of the letters suited the character of the martyr, and the condition of the churches in his day. They do evince that they were written before the diocesan episcopacy was introduced; and in this they establish a claim of antiquity, but other circumstances place them after the period they arrogate to themselves.

other letters of Ignatius, written to Tarsus, Antioch, Hiero, Mary, and two to John; and enlarged the seven, now under consideration; or, as some think, abridged the large ones, to become what are now contended for, and corrected with excessive liberality, the presumption arising from the integrity of our race, that these are the original letters of Ignatius, is exceedingly imbecile. The word bishop (ἐπισκοπος) was not used to distinguish the president (προεστως) or messenger (αγγελος) in the respective churches from the other presbyters (πρεσβυτεροι) who were equally bishops (ἐπισκοποι,) till long after the death of Ignatius. Yet these letters impute to this pious martyr an ardent zeal for the authority of the bishop (ἐπισκοπος) and always subordinate the presbyters to him. This also appears to have been more at heart with the writer than any other subject. Nor can a reader fail to discern the striking contrast between them and the letter of Polycarp before cited; not only in the particular last mentioned, but in the general scope and tendency, and in the breathing of humility and piety, conspicuous throughout the latter. There are other particular grounds of objection appearing in these letters, which ought not to pass unobserved. In the epistle to the Christians at Smyrna, he says, "For I also after his," Christ's "resurrection," "saw him in the flesh, and believe he exists."<sup>f</sup> This is at variance with the opinion, that Ignatius was blessed by the Saviour when an infant.<sup>g</sup> For if then an infant, he could not have witnessed the resurrection of Christ. We may admit he was given to wild beasts, A. D. 116, for the reasons

<sup>f</sup> § 3. Εγω, γαρ και μετα την αναστασιν, εν σαρκι αυτον ειδον, και πιστευω οντα. If, instead of ειδον, be read οιδα, it may then be, "I know that after the resurrection he was in the flesh, and believe that he is so." But why should he have written to those who had the same testimony from the apostles, of the divinity of Christ, which he professed; and why say that he *knew* it, when it was a matter of belief? But if he had seen him, it was proper to assert the fact.

<sup>g</sup> Ιγνατιου ον επι νηπιου, οντα ως απλουν και ακεραιον ενδεικνυμενος, ειμη επισης εκεινω γογοιτο, &c. Nicephorus, vol. i. p. 192.



assigned by Pearson, Smith, and others; and if he was twenty years of age at the resurrection of Christ, which is supposing him to have been as young as can well be admitted for such a testimony, then he was not such an infant, but must have been one hundred and two years old when he walked from Antioch to Seleucia, and sailed to Smyrna, where he wrote four of those letters, and from thence to Troas, where he wrote this letter, that to Polycarp, and another to the Philadelphians, and from thence sailed to Neapolis, from whence he went on foot across Macedonia unto the Adriatic. These labors appear inconsistent with the truth of the fact of his having seen Christ after his resurrection. And if Eusebius and Chrysostom are correct in saying that he travelled as a convict through Asia, preaching and comforting the churches, the difficulty is greatly enhanced. Chrysostom wrote since Eusebius, has given us a long eulogy on the piety and death of Ignatius, through twelve folio half pages, and detailed his labors; yet never once has he mentioned any of his letters. But Dupin thinks there is, in one place, half a line which has been taken from the letter to the Romans. If he accredited those letters, why did he pass them in silence? Many of the terms used in them appear to be of later adoption than the days of the venerable martyr. The church is denominated catholic, (*καθολικη*) the place of worship is *ναος*, a temple, where there is *εν θυσιαστηριον*, one altar, and it is affirmed *την ευχαριστιαν σαρχα ειναι του σωτηρος ημων Ιησου. Χριστου την οπερ αμαρτιων ημων παθουσην*, that the eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins; and also to be the bread of God, *αρτος του θεου*. But the favorite and predominant expression appears to be, *υποτασσεσθαι τω επισκοπω*, to be in subjection unto the bishop, to which is also added, *ως χαριτι θεου*, as to the grace of God.

There appears in the letter to the Trallians an example of proud boasting, badly accordant both with the character and circumstances of the aged martyr



on his way to execution.<sup>h</sup> “Am not I able to write to you heavenly things? But I fear that I should do you an injury, being infants; and, pardon me, lest, not being able to swallow, you should be strangled. For I also, not as though I am bound, am able even to write (γραφαι) heavenly things, and the local dispositions of the angels, and the companies under the princes, and things visible and things invisible.” Christ’s appearance to Paul after his resurrection, and Paul’s rapture and sight of what it was not allowed him to describe, seem to be the things here imitated, but the knowledge which Ignatius boasted, exceeds any claimed by the apostle.

It has been often objected to these letters, that there is a denial in that to the Magnesians, that Jesus Christ proceeded from Sige; which had been affirmed by Valentinus some time after the martyrdom of Ignatius. The words of the letters are, “Seeing there is one God, who manifested himself by Jesus Christ his son, who is his eternal Word, not proceeding from Sige, who in all things pleased him who sent him.”<sup>i</sup> Irenæus and Tertullian, who wrote against the followers of Valentinus, both show that he held Sige to be one of his first duad, from whom mediately Christ came. Also, that Valentinus began his fanciful modifications of the heresy of the Gnostics almost half a century after the death of Ignatius, is indubitable.<sup>k</sup> It has been answered that Sige (*silence*) was meant ap-

<sup>h</sup> § 5. Μη ου δυναμαι τα επουρανια γραφαι; αλλα, φοβουμαι μη νηπιους ουσιν υμιν βλαβην παραβα. Και συγγαμονειτε μοι, μηποτε ου δυναθεντες χαρησαι στραγγαλονθητε (στραγγαλαδητε in the larger letter.) Και γαρ εγω ου καθοτι δεδεμαι, και δυναμενος τα επουρανια, και τας τοποθεσιας τας αγγελικας και τας συστασεις τας αρχοντικας ορατατε και αορατα. Whiston joins ου with δυναμενος, *am not able*; but then these words contradict those which precede them, and also the larger epistle, which here adds his knowledge “of the magnificence of the Æons, and of the incomparable majesty of Almighty God.”

<sup>i</sup> § 8.—Οτι εις θεος εστιν ο φανερασας εαυτον δια Ιησου Χριστου του υιου αυτου, ος εστιν αυτου λογος αιδιος ουκ απο σιγης προελθων, ος κατα παντα ευρησθησεν τα περιφαντι αυτου.

<sup>k</sup> Vide Irenæus, lib. iii. c. iv. Euseb. Hist. lib. iv. c. 2. Nicephorus, lib. iv. c. 3.

pellatively. But this is not satisfactory. It has been also asserted that the Gnostics had the same error before Valentinus. But the correctness of this we have never found. There is a passage in Eusebius which has been brought to show that he referred Sige to Simon Magus, but the better opinion is, that he speaks of Marcellus's Sige, as derived from Valentinus, and agrees with Epiphanius, who affirms that Marcellus took his Æons from that arch-heretic of the second century, which is also credible, because Simon Magus was dead long before his day. This objection might appear enough, but it is amply supported by its coincidence with many others.

The larger copy is generally and deservedly abandoned as tumid with interpolations, and savoring of Arianism. Yet there are expressions in the smaller, how justifiable soever in point of doctrine, which would not have been so frequently reiterated, and with so much point, by any writer before the days of Arius. Thus Ad Smyrnm. s. 1. Δοξαζω Ιησουν χριστον, τον θεον, &c. s. 10. ως διαχανους χριστων θεου. Ad Ephes. Præf. Εν θεληματι του πατρος, και Ιησυν χριστων, των θεων ημων. s. 1. εν αιματι θεου. s. 7. εν σαρχι γενομενος θεος. s. 18. Ογαρ θεος ημων Ιησους ο χριστος, &c. Ad Trall. s. 7. θεων Ιησυν χριστων. Ad Rom. Præf. Ιησυν χριστων, του θεων ημων. *ibid.* εν Ιησυν χριστω, τω θεω ημων. s. s. Ο γαρ θεος ημων Ιησους χριστος, &c. Because Whiston has utterly failed in his efforts to sustain the larger epistles and the pseudo-apostolic constitutions which President Dwight justly pronounces "a miserable forgery—in the latter end of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century," it by no means follows that the above and other passages, which he has noted in the smaller epistles, are not strong proofs that those letters were written long after the days of Ignatius.

That Ignatius wrote letters is true, if the passage to that effect in Polycarp's letter be not an interpolation. But the genuineness of these letters appears to be without any sufficient support prior to the fourth century. That either the smaller or larger ones existed

when Eusebius wrote, is credible, but to what interpolations and alterations they may have been since subjected, is not known. If we place them in the third century, near its commencement, their existence is then admitted to have been an hundred years prior to the evidence furnished by Eusebius, and their language and subject matter will be freed from the many otherwise insurmountable objections which have been so often brought against them.

Those to the churches at Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, and another to Polycarp, seven only, out of fifteen, are now thought to claim any attention.

That parochial episcopacy which they inculcate, even to indiscretion, determines them, at the earliest, to the third century, when the *προεσως*, or *presiding elder*, had monopolized the name *bishop*; and the tacit concession of their scriptural title had produced a partial surrender of the episcopal authority of presbyters, under the plausible pretext of securing the honor and peace of the church. But these epistles discover only a diversity in degree, not order; some change in government, none in ordination. They were individual churches, in each of which there were a bishop, of less power than a modern pastor, a presbytery, and deacons.

The letter to the Ephesians represents them convening, *επι το αυτο*, unto the same place, at the same time, or for the same purpose as a single church. Their bishop, Onesimus, was, in the impious language of the letter, to be respected as the Lord himself, "*ως αυτον τον Κυριον δευ προσβλεπειν.*" Their *presbytery* was worthy of God! *υμων πρεσβυτεριον του θεου αξιον*; and if that duty be chiefly important which is most enjoined in these letters, the reverence of God must give place to clerical aggrandizement.

The uniform representation of a bishop, presbyters, and deacons, in a single church, accords with the state of things in this century. The observation, that *it is good to teach, if the teacher practices accordingly,*

directed to the Ephesian Christians, in the absence of their bishop, implies that the presbyters were teachers; and is corroborated by the commendation of the *silence of their bishop*, “*σιγωντα επισκοπον*,” otherwise culpable. An inculcation of *obedience to the bishop and presbytery*, *εις το υπακουειν υμας τω επισκοπω και τω πρεσβυτεριω*, however singular it would have appeared in the age of the martyr, discovers in such a writer the necessity of yielding to the public notoriety of the sameness of the order, even at the period of the forgery.

The church of Magnesia, in Asia, is also represented as a single congregation, worshipping in one place, and by one supplication. In language approaching profaneness, this letter describes Damas, who was in danger of being despised on account either of youth or stature, *as the bishop presiding in the place of God*, *προκαθημενου του επισκοπου εις τοπον Θεου*; *the presbyters, in place of a session of apostles*, *των πρεσβυτερων εις τοπον συνεδριου των αποστολων*; and *the deacons, as entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ*, *των διακωνων πεπιστευμενων διακονιαν Ιησου Χριστου*. The word *προκαθημενου* is, literally, *occupying the first seat*, which, being of the same kind with that of the presbyters who sat with him, implies that their order was the same. *Διακονιαν*, though rendered *ministry*, is no stronger than *διακονος*. If these presbyters were successors of the apostles, and the pastor denominated the bishop, and compared to God himself, was of the same order, they were not laymen. At Tralles, the church were advised, in the language of modern idolatry, to respect the *deacons*, *διακονους*, and *the bishop even as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father*, *ως Ιησουν Χριστον ως και τον επισκοπον, οντα υιον του Πατρος*, and *the presbyters as a council of God, and a college of apostles*, *τους δε πρεσβυτερους ως συνεδριον Θεου, και συνδεσμον αποστολων*. *He that, without the bishop, presbytery, and deacons, does any thing*, *πρασσων τι, is not pure in his conscience. It becomes you, every individual, and especially the presbyters, to cherish*, *αναφυχειν, the bishop, to the honor of the Father of Jesus Christ, and of the apostles*. After the valediction, *subjection to the*



bishop, as by command, *ως τη εντολη, is enjoined, and in like manner also to the presbytery.* This, in like manner, *ομοιως και τω πρεσβυτεριω,* discovers that the presbytery were not included in the *ιποτασσομενοι,* or subjection to the bishop, as were the people to the bishop and presbytery: another proof that the presbyters were not laymen.

The letter to the church at Rome, dated at Smyrna, is a violation of the sixth precept of the law, representing it to be *easy for them to do what they pleased,* *υμιν γαρ ευχερες εστω ο θελετε ποιησαι,* but injurious to him, if they should spare him. He was sure of death, if they would consent. This letter bears little resemblance, except in weakness, to the rest, and was probably the work of some third Ignatius.

The letter to the church at Philadelphia, in Asia Proper, from Troas, may be imputed to the writer of the three first. It represents Ignatius to have spoken in the church at Philadelphia, with a great voice, *τω επισκοπω προσεχελει, και τω πρεσβυτεριω και διακονοις,* *adhere to the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons.* It was thought that he had foreseen a division of the people, but he calls God to witness, *that the Spirit spake,* *Το δε πνευμα εκηρυσσεν,* *saying these things:* "*Do nothing without your bishop, &c.*" *λεγων ταδε; χωρις του επισκοπου μηδεν ποιειτε, &c.* The position is unsound, the inspiration at best a delusion, and the oath a falsehood, of all which the pious Ignatius was probably clear. But we are concerned at present only with the fact, that there were, at the period of this forgery, no lay elders.

The letter to the church at Smyrna, from Troas, resembles the last and the three first. This church was also a single assembly, *οπου αν φανη ο επισκοπος, εκει το πληθος εστω,* *wheresoever the bishop may appear, there let the multitude be.* The same extravagant comparisons are here reiterated: *Let all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as apostles; and let them reverence the deacons, as the commandment of God. Let that eucharist be accounted valid, which is by*



the bishop, or by him whom he shall appoint, *εκεινη βεβαια ευχαριστια ηγεισθω, η υπο τον επισκοπον ουσα, η φ αν αυτος επιτρεψη.* Whilst this delegation of authority shows the late period of the letter, it equally evinces that the presbyters of the third century were not laymen. “It is not lawful, *ουκ εξον εστι,* without the bishop, to baptize, or *αγαπην ποιειν,* celebrate the feast.” If the duties which are here supposed to be legalized by the bishop, be baptism and the eucharist, presbyters, not laymen, must have been prohibited. The prohibition supposes an antecedent contrary practice; and the power of the bishop, hereby gained, resulted from a restraint imposed upon presbyters, under the pretext of securing peace. They were not, however, reduced to laymen, nor have they been at any subsequent period.

The letter directed to Polycarp, from Troas, resembles the rest, except that to the Romans; yet has been doubted by some who have received the other six. If Polycarp could have had a personal acquaintance with every man in his charge, *τοις κατα ανδραλαλει,* he was scarcely a diocesan. After enjoining him to *let nothing be done without his consent,* “*Μηδεν ανευ γνωμης σου γινεσθω,* turning to the people, the cunning writer says, *attend to the bishop that God also may to you, τφ επισκοπφ προσεχετε, ινα και ο θεος υμιν.* I will be the surety, *soul for soul, of them that submit to the bishop, presbyters, and deacons, ανλιψυχον εγω των υποτασσομενων τφ επισκοπφ, πρεσβυτεροις, διακονοις.* This is not too much to be expected of the *real* author. All the relevant passages have not been quoted, but nothing has been discovered in these letters, either of diocesan superiority, or of lay eldership. Nevertheless, an indiscreet zeal to enhance the power of bishops, and to depreciate the authority of presbyters, appears in all, except that to the Romans.

At the period of these letters, it is plain, that bishops in nothing, differed from pastors of churches, or congregational bishops; except that there still remained in all the churches, presbyters who preached, and might, with the bishop’s usurped permission, perform

the other ordinances; and nothing has appeared in these letters, or any other writings hitherto examined, to show, or even found a suspicion, that there ever had been more than one ordinary preaching office. Also, not a solitary fact or circumstance has occurred in these letters, or prior to the third century, which furnishes even the idea of a lay presbyter. Those who are accustomed to argue conclusively from them, that no diversity existed in the ordination of preachers, ought also to discern, that this circumstance is equally decisive against the existence of lay presbyters at that period, and corroborates the allegation of a total defect of such an ordination, either by precept or example in the Sacred Scriptures.

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### AN ANSWER TO "PHILO-IGNATIUS."<sup>1</sup>

THIS signature is an assumption of that, which the writer aims to establish; and unjust in the eyes of those who deem the letters vindicated a blot upon the memory of the pious martyr. That they are ancient is unquestionable: if P. I. can show them to be genuine, or disclose ancient proofs of the martyrology, he will do a public service. The burden of proving lies upon the affirmative; facts only, not opinions, are admissible. Proofs later than the third century, in which their subject matter appears to place them, are of no avail, except as to their Arian and Athanasian interpolations.

That Eusebius represents Ignatius as *passing through Asia* on his way to martyrdom at Rome, was alleged by W. To this P. I. has politely answered: "Eusebius *in truth* asserts no such thing." The first issue is,

<sup>1</sup> Gospel Advocate, Vol. iii. No. 2.

therefore, upon the words—“την δι’ Ασίας ανακομιδην ποιουμενος.”<sup>m</sup>

P. I. has observed, “Ανακομιδη means, according to Suidas, the same as αναγοδη, επανοδος αναφορα. The word is used in speaking of the transportation of a dead body from one sepulchre to another, from a field of battle to interment. See 2. Macc. xii. 39. Εξεκομιζετο, a word of the same origin is used in Luke, vii. 12, of the son of the widow of Nain, who was *carried out* for burial. The idea, then, conveyed by this expressive word, is that of *carrying away without any will of the person carried.*”

If the three synonymes brought from Suidas be correct, to which Hesychius adds αναγωγή, then ανακομιδη must signify the very reverse of *carrying away*, a *return*. But, “εξεκομιζετο, a word of the same origin, is—*carried out.*” And rightly, for εκ and ανα, in composition, have opposite meanings. Another proof is brought from 2 Macc. xii. 39, where ανακομισασθαι is used for “the *transportation* of dead bodies.” It is a mistake; it is there used for the *bringing* the dead bodies to be buried; otherwise εκκομισασθαι would have been adopted, as in Luke. Κομιζω is to *bear*, εκ is *away*, εκκομιζω is to *bear away*, and εκκομιδη, like εκφορα, is *transportation*, or a *carrying away*. On the contrary, ανα is *re* in composition; ανακομιζω is to *bring back*, or *return*; and ανακομιδη a *return*, as Suidas has shown. By what authority P. I. could affirm, that ανακομιδη signifies a “*carrying away without any will of the person carried*, remains for him to discover. He knew, that κομιδη means *care*, or a *carrying*; that εκ signifies *away*, and ανα the opposite. How he could represent ανακομιδη the same as εκκομιδη, a *carrying away*, his claim of “*learning and experience*” requires him to develop. In κομεω, *curo*, the will of the agent is implied. But if he could elicit from ανακομιδη the idea of “*without any will*

<sup>m</sup> Euseb. lib. iii. c. 36. Vide Necephor. lib. iii. c. xix.—και τεινυν δεσμιοσ δι’ Ασιασ ιων μελ’ ασφαλουσ τουσ θρουρασ—“et Asiam cum firmâ militum custodiâ peragrans.”

of the person carried," he would depart from the synonyms he has brought from Suidas—oppose the letters he wishes to establish, which assert the martyr's willingness; and contradict *ποιουμενος*, which expresses the reverse.

W. imagines that *εκκομιδη* and *ανακομιδη* were words commonly used, for *going from* and *returning to* the capital, especially on those public roads, which were made from Rome into the provinces. But he was "misled by trusting to the Latin translation of Valesius, which is, *cum per Asiam ductaretur*. This, in his zeal to find out an inconsistency, he thought could mean nothing else than an overland journey. If he had looked at the ancient translation by Rufinus, he would have found this very passage thus rendered, *cum per Asiam sub custodia navigaret*."

P. I. concluding, what indeed is too true, that W. is a "novice," sports with him; as if *ποιουμενος* was *navigaret*, and an object, *την ανακομιδην*, equivalent unto *sub custodia*, a circumstance. P. I. has been himself seduced, and as those who fall into bad company have a heart ready for it, so he has been too anxious to make this passage express *sailing*. If a thousand such critics as Philo-Ignatius and Rufinus should render *την ανακομιδην ποιουμενος* by *ex custodia navigaret*, there would be no defect of "modesty" in smiling at their *acumen*.

It is further observed by the author in the "Gospel Advocate;" "An examination of a map would show at once, why Eusebius used the expression *δι' Ασίας*. Instead of going straight from Antioch through the Mediterranean to Italy, which would have been the most direct and ordinary course, the martyr was conveyed *δι' Ασίας*, by the way of *Asia Minor*." "The Martyrology specifies that Ignatius went by water from Selucia to Neapolis, touching only at the several places mentioned in *Asia Minor*." "Learned" men sometimes presume too much upon the "ignorance" of others. A great circle passing through Antioch to

the capital of the empire, varies little from the ancient Roman way, through what is now called Asia Minor, to Pergamus; and from the road from Neapolis by Thessalonica to the Adriatic, opposite Brundisium; and from the Appian way, which passed directly to the Amphitheatre. Any course by sea from Antioch to Rome will deviate from the line mentioned, by a perpendicular distance, not less than three or four times longer than any one from any part of the route *through* Asia, by Neapolis, Thessalonica, and Brundisium. If it were worth the effort to controvert the assertion, that sailing was then the "ordinary" mode, it can be evinced equally incorrect.

That the pious Ignatius was sent by Trajan to Rome in some manner, and died a martyr there, we will not dispute. That these forgeries existed when Eusebius wrote, is credible, but to what interpolations they were afterwards subjected, is not known. A suggestion of a *possibility* that the larger were those which Eusebius had seen, induced P. I. to exhibit comparisons of the three quotations in that versatile historian. The first he has judged unimportant. The second is five to one against him, upon his own showing. With regard to the third, it is enough to say: If Eusebius had the larger ones before him, he omitted only what was in the Scriptures, and sufficiently known. Also, it is not to be supposed, that if the smaller were last made, the abridger would have ventured to deviate from the then most public historian in the Christian world. The same reason also operates with equal force to show, that the larger were prior to Eusebius; at least in that passage, for a wary interpolator must have feared the variance.

Whether the Arian or Athanasian set, or the original forgeries, were seen by Constantine's historian, it is impossible to tell. P. I. thinks their genuineness "long ago settled by the judgment of the learned world." On the contrary, Dr. Priestly alleges, "that the genuineness of them is not only very much doubt-



ed, but generally given up by the learned.”<sup>n</sup> Both have erred; for the history of the dispute will show, it is still *sub judice*. But an appeal to opinions is worse than vain; facts must decide.

The imbecility of W. should have saved him from the charge of *enmity against episcopacy*. If by that name, P. I. intends a *denomination*, W. believes it a part of the body of Christ, and to continue till He comes;—it has his daily prayers: if a *class of professing Christians*, many of these are his best and most beloved friends, with whom he mixes before the throne of grace: if *the diocesan form of government*, W. wishes every one to follow it who chooses, and promises to do so himself, if P. I. will show even probability for its existence in the New Testament, or the two first centuries.

The object of the writer of these numbers is to counteract an episcopacy industriously, but not always ingenuously, propagated in his own denomination; with which the letters of the pseudo-Ignatius have a closer affinity than with that which is diocesan; against the early existence of which they are a standing monument.

<sup>n</sup> Schroeckh, the most distinguished of the modern ecclesiastical historians of Germany, not only asserts that the genuineness of the larger epistles of Ignatius has received very little support from the learned, but plainly intimates an opinion that the smaller, if not a forgery, have been interpolated. In his epitome, he says, “*apparuit tandem, etiam breviores earum, nisi ab alio scriptas, at certe interpolatas esse in gratiam episcoporum.*”—*Ed.*

## SECTION VII.

*Expediency no justification for ordinations not prescribed by divine authority.—The work of Minucius Felix shows that Christians had no temples, altars, nor images, when he wrote, and that their worship was concealed.—The Statue of Hippolytus in the Vatican, is later than A.D. 600.—His tract against Nætus, proves that a presbytery in a church had the power to cite and depose a heretic.—Origen calls the angels of the seven churches in the Apocalypse προστάτες. —The Philocalia were collected long after his death; a passage in them has been misunderstood.—His censures of the ambition and ignorance of bishops and presbyters, and his interpretations of the Scriptures evince, that the church was still in the state of parochial episcopacy.*

IF a mode of government can be elicited from the New Testament, the maxim, "whatever is best administered is best," is more objectionable in ecclesiastical, than civil politics. Ambition has often perverted both; yet the essentials of the church of Christ exist in many denominations unto this day. Nevertheless, to affirm that expediency can vindicate ordinations not found in the word, is to assert, that the end can justify unlawful means. Pious breathings of heart are religion, yet zeal should associate attainable knowledge, correct motives, and other circumstances; and never substitute "for doctrines the commandments of men."

Minucius, Hippolytus, and Origen will now prove, that during the intermissions of the sufferings inflicted by Severus, Maximinus, and Decius, in the third century the scriptural ordinary officers ruled, and served the churches.

The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix appears to have been written, after the apology of Tertullian, and to contain passages transcribed by Cyprian. It is a vindication of Christianity perfectly in character for a Roman orator, as was the writer.

Cecilius presents the arguments of the day against, and Octavius defends, the "mad superstition;" Marcus is intrusted by the former to be umpire, and by him also saved from the trouble of a sentence. This pleasant little fiction offers to our subject nothing relevant, except an unbiassed representation, at its period, of the humble condition of the Christian church in the capital of the world. Cecilius, in his ardor asks; "Why have they," *the Christians*, "neither altars, nor temples, nor any images, at least which are known? Why do they not speak, but in private holes, and corners, whither they repair by stealth, if this their religion be not infamous and criminal?" *Octavius*, who answers the objections of his opponent in succession, asks, "To what purpose should we make any form or representation of God, whose living image, man himself is? Or what temple should we raise to him, since the world, which he has formed, is not able to contain him? Were it not much better to dedicate our mind for his abode, and consecrate our heart for his altar? Nor ought we to be accused of prating in corners, if you be either ashamed or afraid to hear us in public." *Cecilius* had also said, "Their nocturnal ceremonies and concealed devotions sufficiently prove the things charged against them. And they who tell us, that they worship a man, who was crucified, and that the wood of a cross constitutes a great part of their devotion, do worthily attribute to them altars suitable to their crimes, adoring what they deserve." To these things *Octavius* replied; "We neither worship crosses, nor wish to be nailed to them. You yourselves are more likely to adore them, who worship wooden gods, that are made of the same matter." *Cecilius* had with acrimony asked; "shall we suffer men of an unlawful, infamous and desperate faction, without fear of punishment, to attempt against the gods—a confederacy, or rather a conspiracy, into which they are not initiated by any holy rites, but by impious crimes, practised in their night conventicles, solemn fasts, and horrid and inhuman feasts? These are the people that

skulk in the dark, and flee the light, who are mute in public, and full of chat in their private assemblies. They slight the dignities of the priesthood, and condemn the sacred purple, &c." *Octavius* answered; "As for our feasts, they are chaste and sober. With respect to honors, it doth not follow, that because we decline your purple and dignities, that we are the dregs of the people; nor are we to be accounted factious, if aspiring after the same happiness, we all meet together in peace, and retirement."

Such was the humiliating condition of the churches in Italy, at the period mentioned. Instead of power and dignity, liberty of conscience had no public protection, and the true worshippers met, only, under the clouds of the night, in sequestered corners.

Hippolytus, probably an inhabitant of Arabia, was contemporary with Minucius Felix; but if a resident of Portus, the mouths of the Tiber only divided him from the scene of the *Octavius*. Some fragments only are his, in the volume which bears his name.

The "*Chronicon*" was the work of another Hippolytus. The tract "*De Consummatione Mundi*," which treats of Antichrist, is the production of a later age. The confidence and ignorance, which it displays, agree not with the character given by Photius and others, of this father. "The commentary on the story of *Susannah*" is equally unworthy. "The accounts of the Apostles and Disciples," if his, have been interpolated with fictions of later times. The nameless monumental statue, now in the Vatican, rescued from the ground in 1551, bearing an engraving of the Cycle attributed to Hippolytus, is supposed to have been of him; but four-fifths of the titles of the works, appearing on the engraved representation of it, are not those ascribed to him by Eusebius, Jerom, Photius, and the rest; and no one of them is certain. The forms of some of the Greek letters are later and so must the statue be, than the sixth century. "The apostolic tradition" which is now published in his name, rests upon no other evidence than this stone. Being indeed a modification



from the eighth book of the apostolical constitutions, it merits equal contempt, and carries its obvious grounds of condemnation on its face. Yet was it written when bishops were parochial, commissioned without imposition of hands, when a presbytery was in every church, when the presbyters *were all preachers*, and the deacons served. "The demonstration against the Jews," seems to be a commentary on the 69th Psalm. Neither in it, nor in any of the fragments of his commentaries, has any thing been found relative to the government of the church.

The tract "Against the heresy of a certain Nœtus," the patripassian, contains much good sense and has claims of genuineness. In the first paragraph Nœtus is said to have affirmed, that Christ was the Father, and that the Father himself suffered; that Nœtus was Moses; and his brother, Aaron; and that "the presbyters having heard these things, and cited him, *πρεσβυτεροι προσκαλεσαμενοι*, they examined him before the church." He denied, but afterwards, defended openly his opinions. "The presbyters summoned him a second time, condemned"—and "cast him out of the church." If this be a part of the writings of Hippolytus against heretics, mentioned by Eusebius, Jerom, and Photius, and quoted without name by Epiphanius, it accords with all antecedent evidence, and evinces, that the *presbytery* in a church, then, had the power of citing, trying, and excommunicating heretics. The presbyters in this case acted unquestionably as a presbytery, which must have had its president, or in the language of some in that day, bishop. The whole proceedings are described as they should have been, upon the supposition, that this had all the officers heretofore found in any regularly constituted church. The trial and sentence against a heretic, here had by presbyters, well accords with their clerical ordination. Hippolytus says, Nœtus was of Smyrna. Epiphanius makes Ephesus, the birth place of this heresy, but he is a loose writer, and was born more than a century after.



Origen, who was honoured with the name Adaman-tius, was born some time before the end of the second and lived unto the middle of the third century. Having taught successfully a philosophic and catechetical school in Alexandria, he was at length irregularly ordained in Palestine, a presbyter.<sup>a</sup> His expositions of the Scriptures are often refined and visionary; and his doctrines on some points unsound. But as his powers of discrimination have justly demanded high respect, so his piety was of the purest water. Speaking of the angels in the Apocalypse, he says; "That certain ruling presbyters in the churches were called angels, by John in the Apocalypse."<sup>b</sup> The same term, *προεσβως*, was used by Paul;<sup>c</sup> and continually by Justin Martyr, for that presbyter, who presided in worship, and blessed the sacramental elements. This head of the elders must have been, for there was no higher ordinary officer in any Christian church, the angel in each of the churches in the Apocalypse. Here is the learned Origen, a cotemporary for many years with Irenæus, Clemens Al. and Tertullian, another decisive witness, that the *ruling*, was not a *lay*, presbyter. He observes also, "With us, reasonings are mild towards those, who receive instruction; but it becomes him, who has been promoted to the work of teaching, *προισταμενον του λογου*, to be able to convince such as oppose the Gospel."<sup>d</sup> The word *προισταμενον* here used for any person, who has been elevated to the office of a teacher, is used in the same sense, in 1 Thess. v. 12. where, following, without the article, it is another characteristic of those, who had been described as "labouring in the word." If it be the duty of a *προισταμενος president* to be

<sup>a</sup> Erasmus in his life of Origen, and others, have given too much credit to the relations of Eusebius: he was partial to Origen, and opposed Porphyry by stories instead of proofs.

<sup>b</sup> Προεσβως τις των εκκλησιων αγγελους λεγεται παρα τω Ιωαννην εν τη αποκαλυψει." De Orat. S. 34.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17.

<sup>d</sup> Contra Celsum, lib. vi. p. 279.

able to convince adversaries, it follows that the same *προιστάμενος*, *ruling elder* of a church was a teacher. The word denotes presidency or priority, and being associated with the authority to teach, but contrasted with the milder instructions of catechist, it sufficiently discovers the office to have been that of a presbyter; for although the term *bishop* was now often used for *προιστάς*, *presiding elder*; there were, as yet, but the two ordinations, one of presbyters, the other of deacons.

An argument for the identity of the orders of bishops and presbyters, has often been drawn from the first chapter of Titus, where the terms of office, and the personal qualifications are used so promiscuously, as to baffle all powers of discrimination. Origen has observed on the same passage, that, "It is evident, that in the designation of those denominated bishops, Paul delineating what kind of a man, it was fit, should be a bishop, has directed, that he be a teacher, saying, *it becomes him to be able to confute gainsayers.*"<sup>e</sup> Here the presbyters, whom Titus was left in Crete to ordain, are declared by Origen, to have been the persons, whom Paul immediately afterwards denominates bishops; and if these were all to be teachers, which is here also affirmed, they were of one kind only, and none of them laymen.

A passage has sometimes been quoted and unfairly translated, on prayer. "Besides those which are general, there is a certain debt to the widow, who has been received by the church, *τις χηρας—οφειλη*, and another to the deacon, *και ετερα διακονου*, and another to the presbyter, *και αλλη πρεσβυτερου*, but the debt to the bishop is the most weighty, *και επισκοπου δε οφειλη βαρυτατη εστιν*, being required by the Saviour of the whole church, and avenged, unless it be paid."<sup>f</sup>

If the debt to the presbyter was thought by Origen, to be different from that due the bishop, he has not so ex-

<sup>e</sup> Orig. contra Celsum. lib. iii. p. 140.

<sup>f</sup> Orig. Πέρι. ευχης.

pressed it. The translation, "another to presbyters, and another to bishops" is indefensible. Yet if we suppose Origen to have intended, that *the debt due the bishop was weightiest*, because of his care and responsibility, as the *presiding presbyter*, whose superintending anxiety for the whole church, laid a just foundation of a claim upon the people for proportional remuneration, the passage will be a just representation of facts, in the government of the churches at that time; and the adoption of the word bishop in the sense of *πρωεστως*, *ruling elder* would have been no more than a conformity to a mode of expression, which was beginning to be adopted in his day. But the *debt to the bishop* not being expressed to be *another*, may be taken to be that, which was before declared to be due to the presbyter, and what may be said of the bishop's claim may be grammatically viewed, as affirmed of the last of the three kinds of debts, which had been enumerated. This interpretation is supported also, by the circumstance, that he speaks of the officers of the church, sometimes as presbyters, and deacons, and at others as bishops, presbyters, and deacons.<sup>g</sup> But upon any interpretation there is no ground to imagine, that he meant by the presbyter, a layman.

The Philocalia were collected more than a century after Origen's death. To quote this production in support of those writings from whence they are presumed to have been taken, may be proper. But they ought not to be deemed competent evidence of any thing, not found in his works. A mistaken passage has been brought from the Philocalia to prove "the succession *διαδοχην* of the apostles," but the writer is speaking of the *handing down* of the Scriptures by the apostles.

He censures those deacons, who coveted "the first seats of those, who are denominated presbyters, and such as laid schemes to be called presbyters;"<sup>h</sup> and alleges, that as Christ washed the feet of his disciples,

<sup>g</sup> Tract No. v. on Matt. and Hom. vii. on Jeremiah.

<sup>h</sup> Tract 24, on Matt.

“so a bishop should minister as a servant, to his fellow servants.”<sup>i</sup> His complaint of those bishops and presbyters, who were unlearned and flagitious<sup>k</sup>, may have provoked his own bishop, by whose obloquy his character was assailed. Had the office of Demetrius been by ordination, or resulted from seniority, those jealousies would probably never have arisen; nor had the church at Alexandria been deprived of the unrivalled learning, and exemplary piety of Origen.

That there should be one, however designated among the plurality of equals, in every public body, to facilitate their operations, or lead in duties, is suggested by the experience of all assemblies, civil and ecclesiastical. The Greeks denominated him *πρεσβυτης*, *president*, the identical term adopted by the first Christian presbyteries for their *primus*. The seven apocalyptic churches were indirectly addressed, through that officer, by the name *angel*, chosen because less publicly known, but we have found not one instance in any uninspired writing of the use of that name in the same sense. To show how this unordained presidency over equals, grew into parochial episcopacy, all the credible evidence which has hitherto occurred, has been presented. But every effort to discover, even the existence of lay elders, or of any inferior grade of presbyters, has totally failed; neither has there been found a single word of such a diversity, nor the idea of such an officer, in any church. If such a class of men had existed in the apostolic churches, it could not have escaped detection. If the Scriptures had been understood, by the apostles and evangelists to warrant it, the grade must have existed, and would certainly have appeared. The conclusion is consequently undeniable, that those, who find lay presbyters in the New Testament, have made a discovery of that, of which the inspired men, who wrote it, never entertained an idea.

<sup>i</sup> Tract 31, on Matt.

<sup>k</sup> Tract 15, on Matt.



## SECTION VIII.

*Cyprian was chosen bishop of his church by the people, against a majority of the presbyters.—The great promoter of episcopal power.—He presided over one church or congregation only, and had no idea of diocesan episcopacy.—Professing it his duty to act only with the presbyters, he availed himself of every opportunity of acting prior to them.—He often justified his conduct by the pretences of visions, suggestions, and dreams.—The presbyters of Carthage over whom he presided, had not distinct assemblies; the flock was one, and no more.—This bishop was chosen by the people from among the presbyters, and Cyprian is the first and earliest authority for bishops being commissioned by other bishops; how it was done, is not shown; and five of the eight presbyters being opposed to him, it is not discernible how otherwise it could have been effected.—The apostolical constitutions had probably no existence at this period.*

THASCIUS CYPRIANUS was a native of Africa, and a celebrated teacher of rhetoric in Carthage. Convinced by Cœcilius, a presbyter, about the middle of the third century, he adopted his name at his baptism; was, in the compass of a year, ordained a presbyter; and, in the next, made bishop by the suffrage of the people, but against the opinion of five of the eight presbyters of the church.<sup>a</sup> He soon deserted his charge, retiring from persecution. Censured by his people, and the Christians at Rome, he alleged, among other defences, a divine admonition, revealed by vision. His sudden change from Gentilism, and almost simultaneous promotions; his conscious possession of superior talents, with consequent impatience of instruction and ignorance of evangelical doctrines, rendered him the victim of numerous and destructive errors. His native ambition, stimulated by opposition, and supported by mistaken conceptions of priestly power, led him to employ the protracted period of his retirement in epis-

<sup>a</sup> Vide Epist. 43. p. 227.



tolary correspondence, not only with his own forsaken charge, but with the bishops and presbyters of all the churches in the civilized world, wherever there existed inquietude. With him heresy and schism appeared convertible terms, and discipline, rather than truth, the proper instrument of their destruction. The bishops and church at Rome were successively dependent on his guidance, or jealous of his influence. The numerous bishops of Africa found him a bond of union, nor were the churches of Spain and Cappadocia, opposite extremes, insensible of his ascendancy. His ideas of episcopal unity, and of the necessity of intercourse and mutual support among bishops, then every where parochial, probably laid the foundation of hierarchy in the church of Christ. The multiplication of presbyters became necessary in the cities, as the number of Christians increased, more churches than one being in them now prohibited. The danger in times of persecution of convening in multitudes, the instruction of catechumens apart from the church, the frequency of schisms, and other circumstances, evince, that different presbyters conducted worship, at least, occasionally, in separate places. But neither has diocesan episcopacy, nor a solitary instance of a ruling or lay elder as yet occurred. Had there existed more than one congregation in Carthage or Rome, they must have appeared in Cyprian's letters; for it is not probable that any other schisms, or heresies arose in either of those cities, within the period of his letters, than those which he has mentioned. The minuteness of his descriptions of persons and things, renders it certain, that had he been placed over more than one church, it would have appeared. On the contrary, no separate churches, no diversity of communions, no seduction of any particular section of his charge are seen; but though convening in small numbers, and possibly in different places, they are considered one church, having the same officers.

The bishop and presbyters at Carthage sat on the same bench, were all, in the language of the day,

priests, to instruct and administer ordinances, acted in concert in all judgments, excommunications, and restorations; and, except when Cyprian assumed the power, but for which he always offered an excuse, they joined in ordinations. In the absence of the bishop, we find the presbyters refusing the communion to Gaius a co-presbyter, and to a deacon, in which Cyprian acknowledges, they acted uprightly and by rule.<sup>b</sup> Though evidently not scrupulous in the assumption of power, he trespassed only where he was sure of support, and never ventured to ordain a presbyter, but in the presbytery.

When omitting bishops, readers, subdeacons, acolythes, he names only *præpositi* and *diaconi*, it is evidence that the two original orders were not forgotten. "Since it becomes all to be observant of good order, much rather is it proper that the presbyters and deacons, *præpositos et diaconos*, should take care of this, who may afford an example and proof to others, by their conversation and manners."<sup>c</sup> At first opposed by the majority of his co-presbyters, and not yet secure of new ones in whom he could confide, his language was very different from his after conduct. He declared "that *he* had resolved from the commencement of *his* episcopate, to do nothing privately by his own opinion, without the counsel of *his* presbytery, and without the consent of the people."<sup>d</sup> This representation, extorted by circumstances, was in unison with those established customs, in the changing of which he was too successful. Hitherto each original church was governed by its presbytery, the *president*, *πρωεστως*, of which is called in Cyprian, sometimes *præpositus*, but chiefly *episcopus*. Such presbytery, with its president, had been heretofore competent to the manage-

<sup>b</sup> Page 217, Ep. 34.—Integre et cum disciplina fecistis.

<sup>c</sup> Ep. 4. p. 174.

<sup>d</sup> Quando à primordio episcopatus mei statuerim, nihil sine consilio vestro, et sine consensu plebis, meâ privatim sententia gerere—de iis quæ vel gesta sunt vel gerenda, sicut honor mutuus poscit in commine tractabimus. p. 192.

ment of the ecclesiastic government and worship of the Christians in each city, because of the paucity of their number. Cyprian, by the erroneous principle, that where a church has been planted no other ought to be erected, professedly an antidote to schism, at the same time enhanced episcopal influence, and laid the foundation of what he did not foresee, diocesan government. Though tumid with self-importance, and enamored of ecclesiastical influence, it is possible that his opposition to the erection of a second altar, church, and bishop, in any place, was at least primarily to suppress heresy. He wrote to Cornelius at Rome, who had informed him of the ordination of Novatian there, that it was irregular, because where there is one bishop there cannot be another, and pronounces him a spurious and rival head, out of the church.<sup>e</sup> He argues that Cornelius succeeded Fabianus, and that Novatian had no predecessor at Rome. His crime was, therefore, that of Jeroboam. If Novatian worshipped the true God, so did Korah. Why there could not have been a second church at Rome, if the number of converts had justified it, was neither asked, nor answered. That all new assemblies were heretical, soon became, by his influence, the popular opinion. Cyprian contended that those who are in error, have not the Holy Spirit; that this is necessary to him who baptizes, because he who baptizes, remits sins. He affirmed also, that the water must be made clean, sanctified by the priest; "that it may be able to wash away the sins of him who is baptized," which is proved by the passage, "*I will pour clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.*"<sup>f</sup> From such reasonings he concluded, that their ordinations and their baptisms were void. Firmilianus, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in his letter to Cyprian,<sup>g</sup> says

<sup>e</sup> Adulterum et contrarium caput extra ecclesiam. Page 231.

<sup>f</sup> Pages 295, 296, 300.

<sup>g</sup> Epist. 75. — "In ecclesia constituta sit, ubi præsent mājores natu, qui et baptizandi, et manum imponendi, ordinandi possident potestatem."

of all heretics, "that if they divide themselves from the church of God, they can have nothing of power or of grace; seeing all power and grace are placed in the church, where the elders preside, who possess the power of baptizing, imposition of hands, and ordination." The presbyters, not in exclusion of their president, are here asserted to be the highest officers of the churches, and rightly; for bishops had no other authority to baptize or ordain, than as they were presbyters. The words *majores natu* are a correct translation of *πρεσβυτεροι*, shown to be taken in an official sense, by the specification of powers which were peculiarly those of presbyters.

Cyprian, whose efforts had been to acquire language and gesture, not science; whose elocution, not his superior attainments in doctrine and experience, had gained him ascendancy, was sensible of his preferment, and proportionally soured by opposition. Whilst he excused the martyrs for their kindness to the lapsed, Cyprian blamed those presbyters and deacons who had received them to church privileges; and arrogantly directed, that they should be kept from the communion, until they had pleaded their cause before him, and before the confessors themselves, and before all the people.<sup>h</sup> This letter was directed to the presbyters and deacons of a single congregation, who were to be assembled together with the people to decide the cases of the lapsed. But no disparity appears in this or any other of the letters, among presbyters, except the presidential dignity, all being confessedly and universally clerical.

By his discrimination between presbyters and deacons, Cyprian plainly shows, he had no idea of lay presbyters. "Deacons should remember that the Lord chose apostles, that is, bishops and presbyters, *apostolos, id est, episcopos et prepositos*; and that, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles appointed

<sup>h</sup> "Acturi et apud nos, et apud confessores ipsos et apud plebem universam, causam suam." Ep. 16, p. 196.



deacons the servants of the episcopate and the church.”<sup>i</sup>

The fortieth letter has been strangely distorted, on the one hand to prove the commission of cardinals, and on the other to establish the existence of lay presbyters. Whilst Cyprian was in retirement, a layman of the church at Carthage, whose name was Numidicus, being arraigned, confessed and suffered, but survived. This confessor, Cyprian, secure of the popular voice, directs to be numbered, and to sit with the presbyters. No duty is expressed to be performed by him as a presbyter, until the bishop should arrive, and he should be regularly ordained, and promoted to the higher grade. The letter may be freely rendered thus :

“Cyprian to the brethren most beloved, and longed for, the presbyters and deacons, and all the people, greeting :

“It has become my duty to announce to you, beloved brethren, that which pertains to the common exultation, and highest honor of our church. Be it known, therefore, to you, that God has vouchsafed to discover to us, and direct, that Numidicus, renowned by the clearest truth of a confession, and elevated by the honor of fortitude and faith, may be enrolled a presbyter in the number of the presbyters of Carthage, and sit with us among the clergy.<sup>k</sup> By his encouraging counsels he has sent before him to glory a large company of martyrs through a shower of stones and of fire, witnessing with pious exultation the same fiery consumption, or rather salvation of his own wife, clinging to his side. Broiled in the fire, and then overwhelmed in stones, he was abandoned with the dead ; but whilst the tender solicitude of a pious daughter

<sup>i</sup> Epist. 3, p. 173.

<sup>k</sup> Nam admonitos nos et instructos sciatis dignatione divinâ, ut Numidicus presbyter adscribatur presbyterorum Carthageniensium numero, et nobiscum sedeat in clero, luce clarissimâ confessionis illustris, et virtutis ac fidei honore sublimis, &c. Epist. 40, p. 225.



was searching for the dead body of her parent, he is found with symptoms of life, drawn out, and recovered from the mangled remnants of dead companions, he has survived, against his own desires. But the conspicuous cause of his continuance is, that the Lord might join him to the clergy of our church, and adorn with glorious priests the company of our presbyters desolated by lapses. And when God shall permit, by his protection, my presence with you, his promotion shall be effected to the higher order in his worship.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, let that which has been mentioned be done, that we may accept this gift of God with thanksgiving, hoping, from divine mercy, more ornaments of the same kind, that the strength of the church being renewed, he may adorn our ecclesiastical council with men of like mildness and humility. Brethren, most desired and dear, my wish is your everlasting welfare.”

The language of this letter plainly shows that Numidicus was not previously a presbyter; its effect was neither an ordination, nor a direction to accomplish one, but an appointment to a future commission. A ruling elder is not named; and, in the modern sense of the phrase, was probably an idea of which neither Cyprian, nor any who preceded him, had formed a conception. “*Sedeat in clero*” shows, that all who sat with him, were clerical; on this bench he was to sit prior to his promotion. If promotion, *promovebitur*, meant any thing more than the ceremony of ordination, then he was to be raised to a bench above that of the clergy; but such there was not, because the *nobiscum* determines that the same was the seat also of the bishop. In no enumeration of officers in the church, found in Cyprian, or in any preceding writer, has this imaginary presbyter ever appeared; but of the diligence with which the nondescript has been

<sup>1</sup> Et promovebitur equidem cum Deus permiserit, ad ampliorem locum religionis suæ, quando in præsentiam, protegente Domino, venerimus. Epist. 40, p. 225.

unsuccessfully sought, the fanciful perversion of this passage, appearing in several American productions, will remain a curious monument. Cyprian defended his opinion against the reception of the lapsed, as he did his escape from persecution, by his dreams, which he promised to disclose upon his return to the church.<sup>m</sup> He also claimed the inspiration of suggestion.<sup>n</sup> In the cases of Aurelius and Celerinus, who had become confessors, having the *divine suffrage*, as he thought, he needed not to wait for a consultation with the people, and ordained them to be readers.<sup>o</sup>

Those who have absurdly taken the *προεστωτες* of Paul to mean, not *presiding*, but subordinate *ruling elders*, have sapiently understood the *doctores audientium*,<sup>p</sup> or presbyters, who in some private place taught the catechumeni, to be a distinct order, and implying others who were inferior. The letter is short. "Cyprian to his brethren, the presbyters and deacons, greeting: Most esteemed brethren, lest any thing should be unknown to you, either of what has been written to me, or of what I have returned in answer, I have sent you a copy of each epistle, and I trust that what I have replied will not be displeasing to you. But I ought in this letter to disclose to you the fact, that from the pressure of necessity, I have sent the letters to the clergy of the city [Rome.] And because it was proper that I should write by clergymen; but I know that the most of ours are absent, and that the few who remain, are scarcely sufficient for the labor of the daily service, it was necessary to constitute some new ones, who might be sent. Know, therefore, that I have made Saturus a reader, and the confessor Optatus a subdeacon, whom we had some time ago in common council, placed next to the clergy; either when we gave the lesson once and again to Saturus on the day of Easter; or afterwards, *aut modo cum pres-*

<sup>m</sup> Epist. xvi. p. 194.

<sup>n</sup> Placuit nobis, Sancto Spiritu suggerente et Domino per visiones multas et manifestas admonente. Epist. 57, p. 254.

<sup>o</sup> Pages 222, 223.

<sup>p</sup> Epist. 29.

*byteris doctoribus lectores diligenter probaremus*, when being with the presbyters occupied in teaching [the catechumeni,] and having diligently made trial of readers, we appointed Optatus among the readers as a teacher of the hearers, *Optatum inter lectores doctorem audientium constituimus*; whilst examining whether their qualifications might agree with those which ought to be in such as are preparing for the clerical office. Nothing, therefore, has been done by me in your absence; but that which was commenced before in the common council of us all, has been finished, by urgent necessity. I desire, dear brethren, your continued welfare, and remembrance of me. Salute the brotherhood: farewell." In this letter, we have a description of that teaching which is performed by presbyters and readers, of the *audientes*, or catechumeni. Those who by any means were awakened, and had a desire to understand the Christian religion, were instructed as in a school; they who taught them were *doctores*, teachers; and if it were their only employment in the Christian church, they were denominated catechists.<sup>q</sup> These catechumeni are expressly distinguished by the writer from the people, *plebs*, by the name *audientes*.<sup>r</sup> The *doctores audientium* were, therefore, as such, not the public teachers of the people, but the teachers of the catechumeni. This instruction was superintended, and partly performed by the presbyters, but the readers were appointed to exercise their talents in the work. And this letter shows, that Cyprian and those presbyters, as teachers of the catechumeni, in private, did, on some such occasion, make trial of Optatus, and actually appointed him to be a reader. The trial of Saturus was not in the school of the catechumeni, nor are the presbyters said to have been then occupied in *teaching*, but it happened

<sup>q</sup> *Audientibus etiam—vigilantia vestra non desit, implorantibus divinam, &c.* Epist. 18—in eorum numero, qui apud nos catechizati sunt—habentur. Ep. 75, p. 325.

<sup>r</sup> Vide Epist. 18. p. 198.

in the congregation, by directing him to read, several times, public lessons on Easter.

That one presbyter presided—that some were chiefly employed in discoursing and others in reading in the congregation according to their talents, must be supposed, for all these were duties belonging to the office of presbyters. That they acted also as *doctores*, patient teachers of the heathenish *audientes* or *catechumeni* in private places, is supported by abundant evidence, besides this letter. If it affords a tittle of proof that presbyters were of different orders or kinds, let it be shown fairly, and not by the mistakes of one or two good men, who have differed from numerous and more competent judges.

He speaks of presbyters as “honored with the divine priesthood, appointed by a clerical ministry, bound to serve only at the altar and the sacrifices, and under obligation to find leisure for nothing but prayers and discourses.”<sup>s</sup> They are said to be conjoined with the bishop in the sacerdotal honor.<sup>t</sup> In no instance is a discrimination made between presbyters, except that Cyprian claimed the title of bishop, whilst he denominated them his co-presbyters, “*compresbyteri nostri*.”<sup>u</sup> The modern inferior lay or ruling elders are never once mentioned in his writings, but the same profound silence as to this unscriptural order, is found in Cyprian, which has been observed in every writer before him. The supposition on the other hand, that the eight co-presbyters of Cyprian were over distinct assemblies, is not merely gratuitous, but contrary to many passages in his letters, which show that the flock was one and no more. The presbytery was not of many charges, but of one; and the bishop not a mere moderator, but a president of the worshipping

<sup>s</sup> Singuli divino sacerdotio honorati, et in clerico ministerio constituti, non nisi altari, et sacrificio deservire, et precibus atque orationibus vacare debeant. Page 109.

<sup>t</sup> Qui cum episcopo presbyteri sacerdotali honore conjuncti. p. 272.

<sup>u</sup> Page 169.



assembly, as well as of the deliberating and judging church-presbytery.

That upon the demise of a bishop his place was filled by an election of the people,<sup>v</sup> and that the successful presbyter was commissioned by the bishops of other churches, we do at present read in the letters of Cyprian. At any prior period this new order does not satisfactorily appear. To them Cyprian concedes the liberty of doing what they choose,<sup>w</sup> no one of them being accountable to any other bishop,<sup>x</sup> but to God only.<sup>y</sup> Also, every bishop is *the vicar of Christ*,<sup>z</sup> over the Christians, who reside within the geographical precincts of his own parish; and every teacher there, not of his church, be his doctrines what they may, is a schismatic.<sup>aa</sup>

Bishops were entitled to the same honor, and the same obedience, which was due to the high-priest among the Jews, and the Mosaic laws for the protection of the priesthood, and the punishment of offenders, were considered by Cyprian as still in force. Thus was paved the way for all the mischief and bloodshed that have followed in the church. Cyprian's declaration that "he had determined to do nothing without the presbytery," and his apologies, when he made Saturus a reader, and Optatus a subdeacon; when also he promoted Aurelius and Celerinus, and appointed Numidicus to be futurely ordained to be a presbyter, only show that he was restrained by the well known antecedent usages in the church; but *his doing the thing*, was full proof that he did not think as he spoke, but intended to arrogate higher powers, his

<sup>v</sup> Populi universi suffragio. Epist. 59, p. 261.

<sup>w</sup> Unus quisque episcoporum quod putat faciat habens arbitrii sui liberam potestatem. Ep. 73.

<sup>x</sup> Ουτε γαρ τις επισκοπον εαυτον καθιστησιν, his language in the first council of Carthage. Zonaras, p. 275.

<sup>y</sup> Actum suum disponit et dirigit unusquisque episcopus rationem sui Domino redditurus. Ep. 55.

<sup>z</sup> Judex vice Christi cogitatur. Ep. 39.

<sup>aa</sup> Nec curiosos esse debere quid ille doceat, cum foris doceat. Epist. 55.



piety and veracity to the contrary notwithstanding. Several passages in his letters accord with the original idea of two orders, those in authority, *præpositi*, and deacons. Yet having been made a bishop by the votes of the people<sup>bb</sup> against the will of five-eighths of the presbyters, he was ever vigilant to support himself by encroachments on the rights of the presbytery, and indefatigable in his exertions to convince his *colleagues* of their transcendent powers.

The ancient form of the designation of a *πρεσβυτης*, or presiding presbyter, is not shown. But in this book it is denominated an ordination, and said to be by imposition of hands.<sup>cc</sup> The ordination of Cyprian, in whatsoever manner, was probably by bishops, because of the opposition of all the presbyters but three, as those of Cornelius<sup>dd</sup> and others are expressed to have been. This device exalted bishops into a new and superior, though unscriptural order. They became colleagues, maintained correspondence, frequently assembled, made laws, and supported each other's dignity and power.

In the Apostolical Constitutions, instead of an imposition of hands, the deacons held the open gospels upon the head of the intended bishop, during the consecrating prayer. Nor is *χειροθεσια*, that we find, used either in the canons or the constitutions for the ordination of a bishop, but always *χειροτονια*. That these constitutions were not written by the apostles is certain; that they were not known to Cyprian is clear, for he would have used them; that they did not then exist is probable, because first quoted by Epiphanius; that imposition of hands should have been in practice in Cyprian's day, or before the constitutions were

<sup>bb</sup> *Populi universi suffragio.* Ep. 59, 52.

<sup>cc</sup> Ep. 67.

<sup>dd</sup> That Cornelius, after his ordination as a presbyter, was ordained a bishop of Rome, Cyprian expressly asserts. Ep. 69. No contemporary evidence which we have ever seen, or of which we have heard, establishes the same thing of any preceding bishop of Rome. Certainly Fabrianus, his immediate predecessor, was made of a layman a bishop.

made, is unaccountable and incredible, because it must have been given in them. Whatever, therefore, appears in Cyprian concerning imposition of hands, upon one who was already an elder, is probably an interpolation. That Cyprian was beheaded in 258 may be received, but his life by Pontius, though ancient, deserves very little respect.

The works of Cyprian, if unadulterated, discover a new order of presbyters by episcopal ordination, also readers, subdeacons, acolyths, and virgins. By the same authority also are established sacrifices for the dead, the intercession of deceased saints for the living, holy water and remission of sins by baptism, and that there is no salvation out of the church. He inculcated the doctrine of the keys, but although Rome was greater than Carthage, he denied that Stephen had more power than he possessed; and died under the anathema of the successor of Peter. What has been its effect on him, and whether his subsequent canonization has afforded him relief, another day will disclose.

## SECTION IX.

*Firmilian speaks of a plurality of teachers in the same church; of annual meetings of the presidents and presbyters; and of the right of presbyters to baptize, impose hands and ordain; Gregory Thaumaturgus and his genuine writings; his first episcopal charge was one deacon and seventeen individuals. Hitherto every bishop has been such in one worshiping assembly only. Of Methodius. Of Arnobius. Of Lactantius and his writings.*

*Firmilian* presided in the church at Cæsarea, in Capadocia. He wrote an epistle in Greek, about the middle of the third century, in answer to a letter which he had received from Cyprian, by the hands of Rogatian, a deacon. A translation only remains, which appears in the works of Cyprian, and is attributed to him<sup>a</sup> When *Firmilian* speaks of the abounding of knowledge, and the multiplication of teachers, as an event anticipated by an apostle, and provided against by the rule, that one should be silent, if any thing were revealed to another, he alludes not obscurely to a plurality of teachers in the respective churches.<sup>b</sup> Afterwards he observes; "It obtains among us necessarily, that through successive years, the presbyters and presidents meet together, to set in order those things, which have been committed to our care; and if there be any matters of more serious importance, that they may be directed, by public advice."<sup>c</sup> In another place, having asserted that those who are at Rome, have not in all respects observed those things which were delivered from the first, and that they in vain pre-

<sup>a</sup> Vide Cyprian, Epist. 75. p. 319.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Corinth. xiv. 30.

<sup>c</sup> Quâ ex causâ necessàrio fit ut per singulos annos, seniores et præpositi in unum conveniamus ad disponenda ea, quæ curæ nostræ commissa sunt, ut si qua graviora sunt, communi consilio dirigantur.

tend the authority of the apostles, he afterwards affirms; "that all power and grace are placed in the church, where the elders preside, who have the power also of baptizing, and of imposing the hands, and of ordaining. For as it is not lawful for a heretic to ordain, nor to impose the hands, so neither to baptize, nor to do any thing sacred, or spiritual; seeing he is a stranger to that holiness which is spiritual and the work of God."<sup>d</sup> The epistle closes with a salutation directed to the bishops and clergy in Africa. The word elders has been no where else found in the epistle. In the first instance, they are named before their presidents, in a description of the assembling of the officers of many churches in an annual council; and in the second, without particularizing the presiding presbyters, although speaking of a single church, he means the whole bench. Of presbyters he affirms, that they have the lawful right to administer baptism, to impose hands and to ordain. This venerable man unquestionably represents facts, as they were in his day; and is a positive and credible witness, that the presidents of the churches, called bishops in the last sentence of the letter, had not, as yet, at least in Asia, monopolized the power of ordination. In the original letter, the term *Προεστώτες* or *Προηγούμενοι* was most probably used, where we read *præpositi*, which we have rendered *presidents*, they being undoubtedly the bishops, who moderated the board of presbyters, in the respective congregations. The churches of Cappadocia thus appear to have retained the names of their officers, which had been given by the apostles and evangelists at the period of their creation. The *majores natu*, *seniores* or elders, being baptizers and ordainers, were of course not laymen. Blondell on this testimony of Firmilian says, "nequis ullos ab ordinationum jure seniores arcendos putet;" which though directed

<sup>d</sup> Omnis potestas et gratia in ecclesia constituta sit, ubi præsidet majores natu, qui et baptizandi, et manum imponendi et ordinandi possident potestatem, &c.

against an ordination exclusively episcopal, with no less propriety may be spoken against lay presbyters; because the right to ordain appearing thus to have been vested in elders, they were all clerical. Neither can the monopoly of the ordaining power by bishops, nor the protrusion of elders from the clerical office, be vindicated, except by conceding to the church the right of erecting new offices for its government which is an invasion of the rightful authority of the great Head of the church.

*Theodorus*, who was afterwards denominated *Gregory*, and by the credulity of his age, *Thaumaturgus*, was a native of Pontus, and of an honourable pagan family. At the age of fourteen he lost his father. Afterwards he became the pupil of Origen, at Cæsarea in Palestine, with whom he studied five years, and at length the *προσλατης*,<sup>e</sup> or bishop of the church at Neo Cæsarea in Pontus; which according to Eusebius he retained until his death, A. D. 265. His oration pronounced on leaving Origen, which still remains, is eloquent, but adulatory. Yet it speaks him then a Christian, which is more than can be collected from the Philocalia. His Metaphrasis of the Ecclesiastes, or as Jerom styles it, his Ecphrasis, is a short, practical and pleasing representation of the experience and advice of the aged wise-man. The creed ascribed to Thaumaturgus by Gregory Nyssen, in which it is affirmed, "that there is in the Trinity nothing created, and nothing subordinate,"<sup>f</sup> has been thought by some to bear the marks of a later hand, but the autograph of a creed, in some form, probably existed when Nyssen wrote. The exposition of faith,<sup>g</sup> and the twelve anathemas, also printed with his works are evidently of times more modern. His eleven canons, which he gave as advice for the government of a society, upon which barbarians had made an incursion in the reign of

<sup>e</sup> Προσλατου της εκκλησιας υμων Γρηγοριου.—Basil. Epis. 62.

<sup>f</sup> Ουτεουν κτιστον τι η δουλον εν τη τριαδι, &c. Greg. Nys. 2. Vol. 979. Greg. Thaum. p. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Εκθεις της καταμερος πιστewος. Greg. Thaum. p.97.



Gallienus, appear founded in Christian prudence. The last canon has been doubted to be genuine, but its description of the hearers, as standing next within the door; the catechumens as standing immediately before them, and behind the congregation of believers; and of the exclusion of the two former after the reading of the Scriptures and the delivery of a discourse, and before the prayers and the sacramental ordinance, may have accorded with the manner of conducting public worship in some places, at the period of this father. Baronius and Du Pin agree in the rejection of all the sermons ascribed to him, and found with his works; and also of the treatise concerning the soul; all of which evidently appear to have been the productions of a later age. Gregory Nyssen, who lived a century after him, affirms, as others also do, that he was made bishop of Neo Cæsarea in Pontus against his inclination, and in his absence,<sup>h</sup> by Phedimus who presided over (*καθηγουμένον*) the church of Amasia, a neighbouring city, the birth place of Strabo. But it is subjoined, that after a little time, the usual rites were accomplished upon him. That extraordinary powers were conferred by this ordination, was the belief of the antistes of Amasia himself; and Gregory Nyssen has labored with equal assiduity and credulity to establish the same thing. It is also the concurrent testimony of others, that Gregory Thaumaturgus said at his death, he had had but seventeen Christians in his charge, when he was ordained. His episcopal authority could therefore have been neither over presbyters, for his only subordinate was one deacon; nor diocesan, for he had the oversight of no more than seventeen people. This fact, in perfect accordance with the history of the church prior to this period, evinces, that there were but two orders, one to preach and rule, and the other to serve. The like silence as to presbyters is observed, in the account of his ordination of Alexander, upon the invitation of the church of Comana. Nys-

<sup>h</sup> τον σαρματικός ου παροντα. Greg. Nyss. 2. vol. p. 979.

sen represents him as superseding the suffrages of the people, by substituting and ordaining a collier, who had been mentioned sarcastically as the dregs of the people.<sup>i</sup> No presbyters are mentioned; there was one ordainer, one ordained, and one flock. Basil in vindication of the antiquity of the doxology, in which the Holy Spirit is named, having alleged, that Gregory Thaumaturgus had given it to the church at Neo Cæsarea in Pontus, which was still in the use of it, has ranked his spiritual gifts with those of the prophets and apostles.<sup>k</sup> But though Basil, and his brother Gregory Nyssen, with some in our own day, have deemed him an extraordinary man; yet no evidence of such wonder-working powers appearing in his writings, it is probably safer to impute the strange things related by Nyssen, to credulity; and to account him no more than a faithful and successful pastor of a single flock, which by his instrumentality, had been collected in a city almost wholly given to idolatry. In all that remains of this father, nothing has been found either of lay presbyters, or of episcopal diocesan authority. If, as Jerom, Theodoret, and others, have alleged, he was of higher estimation, than his brother Athenodorus, Firmilian, Helenus, and other bishops of his day, the inference is fair, that they also were ministers of single congregations, as all the bishops, who have fallen hitherto under our notice have certainly been.

Of the productions of *Methodius*, mentioned by Jerom, Photius, and others, several fragments with "the banquet of the virgins," have reached our times. Having been written about the end of the third century, they have also been examined with care, but found to contain nothing, that relates to the government of the church, or that can be of any importance. His representations of Origen are feeble, and serve merely to show, that Methodius was not carried away

<sup>i</sup> Προσαγει τω Θεω δια ιερωσυνης του ανδρα κατα τον νενομισμενον τροπον τελειωσας. Greg. Nyss. 2 vol. p. 995.

<sup>k</sup> Basil. op. 2. vol. p. 160.

by such dreams, though at best a miserable commentator of the sacred volumes. He is said to have been a bishop, that is in the sense of the term, in his day, the presiding presbyter of a single congregation, but where his particular charge was, is not settled. He probably lived in Lycia, and died a martyr under the Diocletian persecution.

*Arnobius* lived about the termination of the third century, and wrote as a Christian.<sup>1</sup> He is said nevertheless, by Jerom, to have been at the time of writing his seven books, a heathen, but to have had a dream which had awakened him, whilst a teacher of rhetoric at Sicca in Africa. That his former opposition to the Gospel prevented the confidence, necessary to a reception into the church, until his books evinced his sincerity. This representation is rendered probable by the occasional, but palpable proofs of defective religious instruction, which occur in his books. Nevertheless on several points, disputed in our day, he speaks with admirable clearness and precision.<sup>m</sup>

His seven books are in opposition unto those idolatries of which he had been a zealous advocate. On the officers, and government of the church, nothing has occurred, and consequently, as in every other instance, not a word in support of lay presbyters.

*Lucius Cælius Firmianus Lactantius* is supposed to have received the last name from his flowing style, and Firmianus from Fermum in Italy. But he was a teacher of rhetoric in Africa, where he had been the

<sup>1</sup> "Trecenti sunt anni ferme, minus vel plus aliquid, ex quo cœpimus esse Christiani." Arnob. lib. i. p. 5.

<sup>m</sup> He calls original corruption, "vitium infirmitatis ingenitæ." On the divinity of Christ, after having spoken of him as more powerful than the fates, he says, "Deus ille sublimis fuit, Deus radice ab intimâ, Deus ab incognitis regnis, et ab omnium principe, Deus sospitator est missus," &c. He also discriminates with accuracy between his divine and human natures. To the question why he took the form of a man? he asks in answer, "an aliter potuit invisibilis illa vis—inferre et accommodare se mundo," &c. To the question, *who was it that died?* he answers, "Homo, quem induerat, et secum ipse portabat—mors illa, quam dicitis, assumpti hominis fuit, non ipsius; gestaminis non gestantis, &c.

pupil of Arnobius, from whence he was removed by Diocletian to Nicomedia in Bythinia, and afterwards into Gaul to be the instructor of Crispus, the son of Constantine. His writings have been placed between A. D. 302 and 320. His seven books of *institutions*, his book on the *anger of God*, and another *on the work of God* have survived unto our day. The book on the deaths of the persecutors is not in his style. It must nevertheless have been written by some person, soon after the Diocletian persecution. In one passage in Ch. xv. the writer says, "Comprehensi Presbyteri ac ministri, et sine ulla probatione ad confessionem damnati, cum omnibus suis deducebantur:" which Dr. Burnet has rendered; "Some presbyters and deacons were seized on, and without any proof against them, they were condemned and executed." If the "cum omnibus suis," be meant of the people whose worship they conducted, we have the primitive idea of a church; but howsoever understood, there is no evidence either of the exaltation, or prostration of the one original ordinary preaching office. The several poems attributed to Lactantius are unworthy of credit. His numerous doctrinal mistakes are of common observation, and in some editions collected into one view. Not having been an ecclesiastic, his religion, like that of Justin, Tatian and Arnobius appears to have been his philosophy. Lactantius speaks with much commendation both of Tertullian and Cyprian, but has left, we believe, not a word of the clerical standing or grade of any one in the church."

<sup>n</sup> Lactant. Institut. Lib. v. S. 1.



## SECTION X.

*Eusebius, his character, an Arian ; his object power.—In favor with Constantine.—His advantages, credulity, and cunning great.—Ecclesiastic authority having been conferred upon the Christians by an establishment in his day, he aimed to conceal the truth of the former state of the church.—His history presents the poor and persecuted pastors of single churches in the dress of the bishops, whom Constantine in the fourth century had elevated to rank and power.—The permission of one church in a city, the position that the Holy Ghost was communicated only by the hands of the presiding presbyter, or bishop, required only increase of numbers to produce diocesan episcopacy, for which the church was ripe at the council of Nice.*

EUSEBIUS, distinguished by the additions Pamphilus, Cæsariensis, and Palæstinus, received his Christian instruction from Dorotheus, a presbyter of Antioch : his parentage is unknown. The intimate friend of Pamphilus, he taught in his school at Cesarea, after whose martyrdom, A. D. 300, he assumed his name ; and, sometime prior to 320, became bishop of the church in that city.

Not less a courtier than theologian, he gained and preserved the confidence of Constantine, and was honored with more than ordinary familiarity. To him was assigned the first seat at the emperor's right hand in the council of Nice, and to address him in their behalf.<sup>a</sup> He was also appointed to dedicate Constantine's temple at Jerusalem ; and, at different times, to make two public orations, at the palace at Constantinople.

Jerom calls Eusebius a defender and standard

<sup>a</sup> Some think Eustathius, and others that Alexander had this honor, but the omission of the name by Eusebius, (Life of Constantine, lib. iii. c. xi.) unless he had been the person had been inexcusable.



bearer of the Arian faction.<sup>b</sup> It was also the judgment of Photius<sup>c</sup> that he was an Arian blasphemer. He denominated Christ “a philosopher, and a truly pious man;”<sup>d</sup> often spoke of Christianity as a restoration of the ancient religion of nature, and a substitution of moral virtues in the place of bloody sacrifices; and always inveighed against the consubstantiality, *ομοουσια*, of the Son as Sabellianism. If this were the only spot in his character, however fatal to himself, it would not prevent his competency as a witness; but his disingenuousness, a trait of character appearing in his profession of religion, his doctrines, his conduct in the council of Nice, his treatment of the Athanasians, in his adulation of Constantine, and his representations of the sacred canon, must affect the credibility of the historical representations he has given of the church. His Christianity was philosophy, his piety prudence, and his highest zeal the establishment of the visible church. That he sacrificed to idols, and thus escaped martyrdom, was openly charged upon him, and believed. Such prudent policy restrained the violence of passion, and saved him from much open opposition.

He wrote fifteen books of evangelical preparation, and twenty of evangelical demonstration; of the latter, the first ten only remain. Next followed his Chronicle, and then his Ecclesiastical History, in ten books. He also left four books of the life of Constantine; a treatise against Hierocles, in defence of Christianity; five books against Marcellus; a small gazetteer of the Scriptures, in two books, but the last only survives; an Oration in praise of Constantine; com-

<sup>b</sup> —impietatis Arii apertissimus propugnator. Vol. i. p. 483. Arianæ—signifer factionis. Page 493.

<sup>c</sup> Εν πολλοις εστιν αυτον ιδειν τον υιον βλασφημουνητα, και δευτερον αβιον καλουντα—και αλλα τινα Αρειανικης λυσσης.—Photii Biblioth. p. 12.

<sup>d</sup> —Φιλοσοφος αρα, και αληθεις ευσεβης.—Dem. Evang. Lib. iii. p. 127.

mentaries on the Psalms and on Isaiah. His numerous other works have perished.

It was in the life-time of Eusebius, and much owing to his influence, that the Christian church received the accession of worldly power, riches, and honor, temptations of baleful influence. His advantages for writing a history were great; he mentions his access to the library collected by Pamphilus<sup>e</sup> and to that also of Alexander at Jerusalem,<sup>f</sup> but the intimate of Constantine might command whatever evidence the civilized world possessed. What he wrote of his own days, is more credible; his account of the earlier ages of the church obviously bears, whether intentionally or not, a conformity to the then modern ideas of episcopal domination. And so careful has he been to conceal the gradual progress of the *πρεσβυτεριαι*, *presiding presbyters*, into the parochial, diocesan, and metropolitan bishops, that Blondell was able to find in his works, but three passages, in which he could discover a hint of the ancient state of things; and even those three have been written with so much caution, that they must be abandoned as doubtful proofs. His credulity in some things, forms so strange a contrast with his discernment and caution in others, that their consistency is an enigma, solvable only at the expense of his moral character. The success of a prayer of a deceased martyr, and her apparition to Basilicles;<sup>g</sup> the efficacy of the prayer of Narcissus, whereby water was turned to oil;<sup>h</sup> and of a piece of sacramental bread, sent by a child to a dying man for the removal of his guilt,<sup>i</sup> appear to have been firmly believed by Eusebius. But how a *rational* believer, who prized the Christian religion only as a system of philosophy, could have been firmly persuaded of such incredible things, is a difficult problem.

When he denominates those by whom the first pro-

<sup>e</sup> Eccles. Hist. Lib. vi. c. 8.

<sup>g</sup> Lib. vi. c. 5.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid. c. 44.

<sup>f</sup> Ibid. Lib. vi. c. 22.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid. c. 9.

mulgation of the gospel was effected, evangelists and apostles, *εὐαγγελιστῶν καὶ ἀποστόλων*,<sup>k</sup> he follows the Scriptures; and when describing a period somewhat later, he substitutes pastors and evangelists, *ποιμένες καὶ εὐαγγελιστοὶ*,<sup>l</sup> he is still not censurable, if by *ποιμένες* he intended the bench of presbyters in every church; but if by pastors, he meant the *προεστώτες*, presidents only of the respective congregations, he misrepresents the condition of the churches, at the period of which he there treats. And this sense is most probable, because he has used *προεστώτες* and *ποιμένες* as convertible terms.<sup>m</sup> It had been in the preceding ages accounted one characteristic of the orthodoxy of a church, that it could show a line of presiding presbyters, or bishops, from the days of the apostles; and we have seen, that Irenæus and others, have been careful to record their names; Eusebius, from motives of another kind, not to be mistaken, has devoted a number of his chapters to the perpetuation of the successions in the original churches; and has noticed, with great emphasis, many individuals of different ages, in distinct chapters, the enumeration of whose names, with whatever he has said of them, might have been exhibited together, with far less labor, but not with equal pomp. His efforts have had their premeditated effect. He has clothed the early presiding bishops in the dress of bishops of the fourth century. His example has been followed. It has been asserted, "that it is as impossible to doubt, whether there was a succession of bishops from the apostles, as it would be to call in question the succession of Roman emperors from Julius Cæsar." This is true of the name, but a misrepresentation of facts. The *imperatores*, among the Romans, when the word came first into use, differed not more in power and dignity from those emperors who afterwards governed the civilized world, than the bench of presbyters, or bishops, whom the apostles and evange-

<sup>k</sup> Lib. iii. c. 3.

<sup>l</sup> Lib. iii. c. 37.

<sup>m</sup> Lib. viii. 2d. Suppt. c. 12.

lists placed in the respective churches, did from the lordly dignitaries, who have succeeded in later ages to the title of bishop. It is also as correct to apply the term emperor, in its modern sense, to every commander of an ancient Roman band, as it is to use the word bishop in its modern European meaning, to designate the early persecuted and humble followers of the fishermen of Galilee. In like manner to degrade the presbyters, who were the highest kind of officers in every Christian church, by making a portion of them laymen, is as unscriptural an error, as the erection of the primus presbyter in every church, to be the lord of his brethren, whether in the character of a diocesan, metropolitan, patriarch, or pope. In the former three centuries, the influence and the power of these primi among the presbyters, we have seen gradually increasing, until a parochial episcopacy became everywhere established. But from the time of Constantine and Eusebius, when the church, becoming more corrupt, was visited with riches and honors, a diocesan, and, as the canons of the council of Nice discover, a metropolitan episcopacy prevailed. Bishops seem to have stepped up to a more elevated seat, and to have been accounted henceforth of a higher order. They were the political friends of Constantine, and treated by him with discriminating attention. When he sent orders to Chrestus, bishop of Syracuse, summoning him to a synod, he directed him to associate with himself two of the *second bench*, at his own election; and also to bring three servants, all at the public expense.<sup>n</sup> But although the degradation of presbyters, was the necessary consequence of such episcopal aggrandizement; yet were they, in no instance, merely accounted laymen. Amongst the numerous martyrdoms recorded in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, not a single person is mentioned, who sustained the office of lay presbyter. We have seen in the

<sup>n</sup> ἡ δύο γὰρ τινὰς τῶν ἐκ τοῦ δευτέρου θρόνου καὶ τρεῖς παῖδας, &c.  
Lib. x. c. 5.



works of Cyprian, the commencement of episcopal influence and rivalry; this appears to have advanced until, by the righteous judgments of God, the Dioclesian persecution fell upon the Christian church.<sup>o</sup> But in the glowing description of this visitation, given by Eusebius, it was by no means his design to inveigh against the hierarchy; rather artfully he points the judgments of heaven against those who should resist usurpation. So remote were his desires from lessening his own office, that he approved the sentiment, that the Holy Ghost was communicated by the hands of the bishop,<sup>p</sup> than which, no doctrine could have been more conducive to that sacred veneration which has been the basis of ecclesiastical domination with the credulous. This error, coming in aid of a proposition generally adopted, that there must be but one Christian society in each city, would require only a large accession of converts, to insure the erection of diocesan episcopacy in any place. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, prior to A. D. 270, says in Eusebius, that there were in the remote suburbs, places denominated synagogues, in which a portion of the congregation assembled for worship.<sup>q</sup> Athanasius, who was bishop of Alexandria in the life of Eusebius, shows that in his time there were different Christian assemblies there, and that they were all collected in one, only in Easter. But although, from the co-operation of these causes, there were in Rome, one bishop, forty-four presbyters, seven deacons, and as many sub-deacons, forty-two acolyths, and fifty-two exorcists door-keepers, and readers, we find no lay-presbyter. Sub-deacons there were, but no sub-presbyters. The correct principle, that there could be but one *προεστως*, *presiding* presbyter in a church, produced parochial; and when associated with the unauthorized rule, that

<sup>o</sup> Lib. viii. c. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Lib. vi. c. 43. Τούτε σφραγισθῆναι ὑπο τοῦ ἐπισκόπου—μη  
 τυχῶν, πῶς ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀγίου πνεύματος εἶλυε.

<sup>q</sup> —ἐν προασιεῖσι πρῶτῳ κειμένοις, κατὰ μέρος—συναγωγῶν.—  
 Lib. vii, c. 23.



one church only could exist in one city, produced also diocesan episcopacy. But how lay presbyters came in, it will be soon enough to inquire, when they have found their way into the church. Come when they may, their introduction will be an innovation, equally unauthorized by the word of God, and at variance with the history of the church, during the three centuries which have already passed under our inspection.

Eusebius relates, with much improbability, that “after the martyrdom of James, and the immediately consequent destruction of Jerusalem, it is reported, that the apostles and disciples of the Lord who were still left alive, came together from every place, with the relations of the Lord, according to the flesh, of whom many then survived. That they all held a council, and with one consent judged Simeon, the son of Cleopas, of whom mention is made in the gospel, to be worthy of the throne, *θρόνον αἰών.*”<sup>r</sup> The apostolic commission had no other limits, than the world; and the evangelists were also general officers, ordained to go from place to place, and country to country, to erect new churches, or set in order those which had been planted.

The government of particular societies was committed to presbyters, who were generally men of ordinary gifts and talents. In the distribution of the fields of labor among the apostles, James the Just, if he was an apostle, remained, because of the importance of the station whence the gospel had proceeded, and where its chief proofs still existed, among the Christians at Jerusalem, and in Judea, by a common consent. But in the age of Eusebius, the presiding presbyters, having monopolized the name bishop, and changed its meaning from the oversight of the church, to that of the original bishops themselves, claimed to be sole successors to the offices and honors of the apostles; or rather, according to the representation of Eusebius in

the case of James, the bishop's throne was an honor above that of the apostleship. To the first seat in the presbytery of the respective churches, the succession was not yet reduced to uniformity: in some it was according to seniority among the presbyters; in others the successor was elected by and out of the members of the bench, as at Alexandria in Egypt: in others, he was commissioned over their heads, without or even against the voice of the majority of the presbyters; as in the case of Cyprian at Carthage: and sometimes superstition, as in the choice of Fabianus,<sup>s</sup> decided the question. But upon the death of James, the choice of a successor is reported to have been deemed sufficiently important to authorize a call of the surviving apostles from the different nations, wherever dispersed. Nevertheless the same thing might have been effected as well by an evangelist, or by the presbyters of that particular church, no imposition of hands being then necessary to constitute a *προεστώς*, *presiding* presbyter. That the blood relatives of the Saviour should have been convened, as though by their relationship they had authority or grace which might aid the consecration, is just as credible as the rest of the story, which had rested upon mere report, if it had any existence for two centuries, and as such is given by the credulous historian.

The circular, by which the synod of Antioch promulgated their excommunication of Paul of Samosata, has been preserved by Eusebius. After specifying sixteen by name, it proceeds, "and all the rest present, who live in the adjacent cities and countries, the bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, and the churches of God to our beloved brethren in the Lord greeting."<sup>t</sup> An evil had arisen beyond the control of a single church: its repression was important. The apostle and evangelists being long before removed by death, and the presiding presbyter having assumed powers

<sup>s</sup> Lib. vi. c. 29.

<sup>t</sup> Lib. vii. c. 30.—*Επισκοποι και πρεσβυτεροι και διακονοι, και αι εκκλησιαι του θεου, &c.*

beyond the restraint of his co-presbyters, a necessity was created that the neighboring Christians, both clergy and people, should concur in correcting the evil. Had lay-presbyters existed, they must have been here included. If supposed either in the word presbyters or churches, the hypothesis must extend to every church; and a class of such officers existed in every Christian assembly, yet never discriminated in any enumeration, or by any occurrence, or circumstance, recorded by any writer, orthodox or heretical, during the first three hundred years of the church. The *ruling presbyter*, *πρωτοπρεσβυτερος*,<sup>u</sup> we have had in full detail. He was the primus presbyter on every bench, equal in commission, but presiding in duty; his accumulated power and dignity, before the days of Eusebius, had come to be distinguished by the name bishop. The "helps and governments"<sup>v</sup> have been erroneously represented as "those who rule well, but do not labor in word and doctrine." If these mute officers had been found in every church, we should have heard of them. The man who can suppose, that such an office could have existed in the societies in the days of the apostles, and no trace of it have remained afterwards; or that such officers could have been continued in the churches, but have escaped so much as a whisper in all the divisions and agitations, in all the lists of martyrs and councils, and every mention among the friends and enemies of the church, for three hundred years, has a mind capable of any extravagance of credulity. He can adopt an erroneous and imaginary meaning of Scripture, and afterwards adhere to it, not only without, but in opposition to, all evidence.

A charge, severe but probable, has been brought against Eusebius, of suppressing certain passages, particularly 1 John v. 7, from his edition of the New Testament. He was commanded by Constantine to cause

<sup>u</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17. Rom. xii. 7, 8.

<sup>v</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 28.

fifty copies of the Scriptures, legible and fit for use, to be written on prepared parchment, by skilful artists, and to send them to Constantinople by two public coaches, under the care of some deacon of his church.<sup>w</sup> These copies, having the influence of Constantine, must have been received by the churches, for whom they were provided by the emperor, with veneration. That in these copies Eusebius suppressed certain passages tending to establish the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son, particularly 1 John v. 7, has been lately alleged, and too well supported. He excepted against the doctrine of those texts, in the council of Nice, but escaped censure by covering his regard for Arianism under the pretence of a fear of the heresy of Sabellius. In a letter to his charge, he defends his inconsistency, by softening the language of the creed he had reluctantly signed. The disposition of the man, his opposition to the doctrines, the emperor's coincidence with him in sentiments, the opportunity afforded him by Constantine, the complexion of the Greek copies generally, over which his edition must have had a decisive influence; and, on the contrary, the support which the text receives from Latin copies and writers, Tertullian, Cyprian, Facundus, Vigilius, and others, all conspire with the certainty of his having omitted a portion of Mark's gospel, to attach the blame of the defective copies to his disingenuousness.

<sup>w</sup> De vit, Constant. Lib. iv. c. 36.



## SECTION XI.

*The council at Jerusalem was extraordinary.—Councils may be traced to the commencement of the third century.—They were at first advisory, not appellate, much less legislative.—They strengthened clerical power.—The council of Carthage, A. D. 258.—The two councils of Antioch, A. D. 264, 270. The council of Eliberis, A. D. 305.—The council of Arles, A. D. 309.—The synod of Ancyra, A. D. 314.—The synod of Pontus, A. D. 314.—The general council of Nice, A. D. 325.—The general council of Constantinople, A. D. 331.—The general council of Ephesus, A. D. 431.—The general council at Chalcedon, A. D. 451.—The second general council at Constantinople, A. D. 553.—The third general council at Constantinople, A. D. 680.—Another, A. D. 692.—The seventh Œcumenical council was at Constantinople, A. D. 754.—Another seventh at Nice, A. D. 787.—This was after the commencement of the empire of Charlemagne, the erection of a monarchy in England, and the civil power of the pope.—None of these councils were founded upon the consent of the Christian church, or upon any spiritual authority; often established error, and create no obligation upon the Christian world.*

THE records of the early synods and councils of the Christian church, so far as genuine, are credible evidence of facts, and competent, to some extent, to show the condition of the church at different periods. Ecclesiastical associations have never possessed the rightful power of legislation in the church of Christ; but as every man is bound to believe for himself, so every Christian denomination has a right to adopt their own form of church government, and every member equal liberty to dissent and withdraw. The voluntary conventions of synods and councils are justifiable, at least when merely deliberative. The conduct of Paul and Barnabas, in waving the rite of circumcision with respect to Gentile converts, having been censured at Antioch, by persons who had come from Jerusalem, was submitted unto, and confirmed by the opinions of Peter, James, and perhaps John, and



the presbyters and church at Jerusalem. But the question was proposed in the abstract form, and the advice was founded upon the antecedent decisive testimony of the Holy Spirit. This appeal ought, therefore, to have remained, after inspiration ceased, an isolated case, nor was it followed for a long series of years.

We learn from Tertullian, in the third century, that "councils were collected in certain places throughout the Greek cities, from all the churches, by which the higher matters were managed in common, and the representation itself of the whole Christian persuasion, was regarded with high respect."<sup>a</sup> Because, when synods were introduced, the churches were represented by delegates, and this was among the Greeks only, it has been conjectured that they took the idea from their own civil forms. The practice was certainly founded on common consent, since they were neither at first of appellative jurisdiction, nor founded on Scriptural authority. The numerous Greeks then in lesser Asia, were probably included in the term "*per Græcias*." Consultations concerning Easter were held in Palestine, Pontus, Rome, and France, in the days of Polycrates and Victor, about the commencement of the third century.<sup>b</sup> Cyprian did not neglect to avail himself of means, so well adapted to enhance clerical influence and power, to which he was so much inclined. In Africa, therefore, they soon became frequent; and their members gradually losing sight of the representation of their churches, considered themselves as acting by virtue of their offices. And as the presiding presbyters had become bish-

<sup>a</sup> Tertul. adversus Psychicos. c. 13. Whether he speaks only of the Montanists, or of those consultations of the orthodox in Asia Minor, against Montanus, cited by Eusebius, from Apollinarius, Lib. v. c. 15, let the reader decide. "Aguntur præterea per Græcias, illa certis in locis concilia ex universis ecclesiis, per quæ et altiora quæque in commune tractantur et ipsa representatio totius nominis Christiani magna veneratione celebratur."

<sup>b</sup> Vide Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. v. c. 23, 24, 25.

ops of the bishops, who constituted the presbyteries of the respective congregations, so the metropolitans soon presided in the provincial synods, and afterwards patriarchs in general councils. That of Carthage in the reign of Decius was convened by Cyprian, A. D. 258, to consult of the propriety of re-baptizing those who had been baptized by heretics. There were eighty-four members, who all gave their own, and sometimes also the votes of others, as proxies, and the details evince, that they were considered the representatives of particular churches there named. Cyprian, when opening the business, described the assembly as deliberative only, and not as designed to pass a censure upon any individual. The fifth speaker observed, that all who came to his church from heretics he baptized, "and those from their clergy he placed among the laity."<sup>c</sup> It has appeared from the works of Cyprian, that episcopacy was then parochial; consequently the presbyters of a single church must have been the clergy here named. No other reference to presbyters is found in the record of this council. The councils held at Antioch, A. D. 264 and 270, against Paul of Samosata, excited great interest among Christians. They were not obstructed by the civil power: on the contrary, application was made to the emperor Aurelian, though a Pagan, to effectuate their final decision by ejecting Paul from the church. This appeal of a Christian synod to the civil authority, was unscriptural, unprecedented, and of mischievous tendency.

The council of Eliberis in Spain, about A. D. 305, and that of Arles in France, A. D. 309, both recognize the subordination of deacons to presbyters, and of each to their bishop, who was evidently parochial.

The synod of Ancyra, in Galatia, met A. D. 314, to establish rules of discipline concerning the reception of those who, in time of persecution, had abandoned the cause. The first canon re-admitted such presby-

<sup>c</sup> Και τους απο κληρον αυτων λαικους εσηησα.—Zonaras, p. 276.

ters unto the honor of their bench, *τιμης της καλα καθεδραν μετεχειν*, but denies them the privilege of serving. By the second, deacons so offending are in like manner to be received to the other honor, but not again to administer the bread or the cup, or to preach, *αγιον η ποτηριον, ανα φερειν, η κηρυσσειν*. If the deacons in the churches of Asia Minor served the sacramental tables, preached and held the other honor, *την αλλην τιμην εχειν*, certainly the presbyters were not laymen; nor do such appear in the other canons of this synod. By the thirteenth canon, it is made unlawful for country bishops (chorepiscopi, *επισκοποι καλα χωρας*) to ordain presbyters and deacons, and also city presbyters without the consent of the bishop in the other parish.<sup>d</sup> The chorepiscopi presided over congregations in villages, and the design of this canon was to monopolize power and influence in city bishops, by prohibiting ordinations by the chorepiscopi. If they were bishops by a secondary or canonical ordination, this canon was in furtherance of the same design, the accumulation of power, and of no higher authority, that is, merely void. If they had been ordained as presbyters only, this canon is a recognition of their right to ordain presbyters and deacons, at the period of this synod.

The synod of Neocæsarea in Pontus, was A. D. 314, and also prior to the council of Nice. By the first canon, presbyters are forbidden to marry upon pain of deposition, which is conclusive proof that they were not laymen. By the eleventh canon it is decreed, that no presbyter shall be ordained under thirty years; and the reason assigned is, that Christ was baptized and began to teach in his thirtieth year. The thirteenth prohibits country presbyters from offering in the presence of the bishop and presbyters of a city, but *if they be absent*, (*εαν δε απησι*) and he alone should be called to prayer, he may administer the bread and

<sup>d</sup> Χαιρετισκοποις μη εξειναι πρεσβυτερος η διακονους χειροτονειν αλλα μηδε πρεσβυτερος (Blondell supposed πρεσβυτερος) πολειας χαρις Ιου επιτραπηναι υπο Ιου επισκοπου μελα ρητμματα εν ειερα ταρακτια.—Zonaras, p. 295.

cup; by which it is evident that the country presbyters were, when alone, to break the bread, and to bless the cup. The fourteenth canon declares the chorepiscopi to be, *κατὰ ἴτυπον*, *after the example* of the seventy disciples, and consequently that they were not successors to the twelve apostles. The fifteenth declares, that there ought to be no more than seven deacons, even in a great city. In the councils prior to those denominated œcumenical, no mention has been made of any elders, but those who preached and administered ordinances; the fathers and the synods thus agreeing, all probability of their existence hitherto is thus evidently excluded.

There were no general councils until the emperors became Christians. Constantine set the example, and without invading the peculiar province of an ecclesiastical, presided in the council of Nice, and probably prevented much discord. In the character of a civil governor, it belonged to him to preserve the peace of his subjects. To call the council, he had no ecclesiastical authority. The fact, that the kings of Israel gathered the people on several occasions, was no justification. They governed under a theocracy, and were to execute, not to make laws: they were also commissioned, being the anointed of the Lord. When Christianity arose, though in, it was not of, the world, and was established upon principles wholly distinct from those of civil government. Its subjects were enjoined submission to the laws of the country wherever they might be, if not inconsistent with the divine law. Valentinian refused to call a general council, and assigned as a reason, at least ostensive, that being a layman, he had no right. The councils of Carthage, Antioch, Ancyra, and Neocæsarea in Pontus, were prior to any of those termed œcumenical. That at Nice, A. D. 325, was the first so denominated.<sup>e</sup> The professed object was the defence of the divinity of the

<sup>e</sup> Οἰκουμένη signified the habitable world, but was used for the extent of the Roman empire; from hence, οἰκουμένος, *œcumenical*, when applied to a council, imported, that it was convened from the



Son of God, against the heresy of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, whose chief opponent was Athanasius, a deacon of the same church. The second canon recites, that some who had been Gentiles, as soon as baptized, pass into the office of bishop or presbyter, *και αμα τω βαπτισθηναι προσαγειν εις επισκοπην, η εις πρεσβυτεριον*, which is forbidden, until they shall have given proof of their change. This accords with the antecedent practice of the churches, in showing, that at the period of this council, the ordination of a bishop was sometimes still the first, and only ordination of him who received the office. The fourth canon gives the right of election and ordination of a bishop, to all those of the same province; but subject to the authority of the Metropolitan. As the bishops in the provinces were parochial, or merely pastors, and without any previous ordination as presbyters, the office having been the same, these ordinations, though denominated episcopal, were therefore still, in fact, by presbyters, and consequently equally without Scriptural authority, and episcopal succession, in the modern sense of the terms; and although by the *presiding presbyters*, *προεστώτες*, who had long before monopolized the name bishop, their office was no more than that of presbyters. The fifth directs two synodical meetings of all the bishops in a province, annually, to judge in cases heretofore within the cognizance of the presbytery of each church. This removed the responsibility of presiding presbyters or bishops from their own co-presbyters, who were not to sit in the new provincial synods. This innovation was the more strange, because presbyters and deacons constituted some of the most active members of this council of Nice. The sixth canon makes the consent of the bishops of Alexandria necessary to the election of all bishops in Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis in Africa; and also of the bishops of Rome, of An-

civilized world. But the gospel had extended beyond the limits of the empire, and the whole church never acted in any one council.



tioch, and of other provinces, as far as had been usual. The seventh canon secures the same undefined prerogative to the bishop of Ælia Capitolina. With this council commenced the combination of civil and ecclesiastical authority; force being substituted for the conviction of truth.

The second was at Constantinople, A. D. 381, in the reign of Theodosius the Great, for the correction of the errors of Macedonius, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The second canon confines bishops to their own dioceses, and declares that the ecclesiastical government of each province shall be administered by its own synod.

The third was convened at Ephesus, A. D. 431, by Theodosius the Younger, emperor of the East, and condemned the heresy of Nestorius, who accounted the Son of God and Christ two persons, and *denied that the Virgin was the mother of God*. In the canons of this council, the terms "bishops, clergy, and laity," often occur, the word clergy including unquestionably the presbyters and deacons. Charisius alone is named in these a presbyter; he was a heretic, whose writings were condemned by the synod.

The fourth met at Chalcedon, under the emperor Marcianus, A. D. 451, and anathematized Eutyches and Dioscorus, who held that Christ was to be worshiped as God and as man; and in both natures as one nature. This council recognized the repeal of the second council of Ephesus by the bishop of Rome, which had established the Eutychian error. The second canon expressly describes bishops, *chorepiscopi*, presbyters and deacons as clergy.

The fifth was held at Constantinople, in the reign of Justinian the First, A. D. 553. Its efforts were directed against the Nestorian errors which had been taught by Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodorus of Tarsus; the opinion that the soul exists before the body, and some ancient doctrines of Origen and others.

The sixth convened at Constantinople, A. D. 680, under Constantine the Fourth, called Pogonatus, the

father of Justinian, against the Monothelites. This council held, that Christ had one person, but two natures, neither of which was destitute of its own will and works.

Another council, holden in 692, in the tower of the palace, by Justinian the Second, is also called the sixth, because the former, like the fifth, enacted no canons. Of this there remain an hundred and two. The canons of this council abound with proofs that presbyters were of the clergy; the reader will find these in canons 3, 6, 13, 14, 32, 58, and others.

The seventh œcumenical council was held at Constantinople, in the year 754, under the reign of Constantine, called Copronymus, the father of Leo the Fourth, and condemned the use of images in worship. This council is denominated œcumenical by the Greek church, but is rejected by the Latin. Upon the death of the emperor Leo, his son Constantine being a youth, his mother Irene who reigned in his behalf, held a council, also accounted the seventh, at Nice, A. D. 787, in defence of the worship of images, against the iconoclasts. The records of these furious zealots are preserved with great particularity, together with their unanimous anathema of all those who will not kiss the images.<sup>f</sup>

At the period of the council last mentioned, Charles the Great possessed Burgundy, France, Germany, and Italy, and was about to re-establish the empire of the West, which had been overrun and divided in the beginning of the fifth century. A little before the time of this council also, the pope had received the civil exarchate of Ravenna, the commencement of his temporal power; and a general monarchy had been erected in England.

These councils, in no instance, were founded on the consent of the whole church. Even had they been, they could thereby have derived no power to legislate for Christ, to erect or legitimate the hierarchy, which

<sup>f</sup> Εικόνας ασπαζόμεθα, μη ουτως έχοντας αναθέμα εστώσαν.

was the principal object of their care. The pretence that they were under spiritual guidance is absurd, for council decided against council, and often against the word of God. Their decisions were by majorities, who repeatedly silenced the truth merely by numbers, and generally persecuted those who were in the minority. Augustine gave it as his opinion, that the truth was to be investigated without regard to the decrees of councils; and Gregory Nazianzan declared that he never had observed good to result from any council. What he had not, others may have seen. Councils composed of holy men, with a view deliberately to investigate the meaning of revelation, and to advise, have, especially in times of great declension, done much good. Nevertheless their articles, creeds, and confessions, however excellent, are uncommanded, merely human, and destitute of authority.

## SECTION XII.

*The canons of the council of Nice established diocesan episcopacy, for which various causes had paved the way.—Yet parochial episcopacy was not wholly banished in the fourth century.—Hilary of Poitiers ; his writings.—Hilary, a deacon of Rome ; his commentary among the works of Ambrose, and his questions in the 4th tome of Augustine.—He says, Presbyters were at first called Bishops, and still performed the same duties in their absence.—And proves, in the middle of the fourth century, that the ordination and office of a Bishop and Presbyter were the same.—He agrees with antecedent proofs that the priority of the Bishop or first Presbyter, was merely adventitious, and no diversity in office until made so by canons.*

THE removal of parochial authority by the introduction of councils, paved the way for, and became the engine of, the establishment of diocesan episcopacy. Power being aggregated from the individual churches into synods and councils, there remained to be effected for the hierarchy, the exclusion of presbyters from synods and councils, and the appointment of bishops by bishops, both of which were secured by the canons of the council of Nice. But although a superior order was by these means prepared for diocesan government, it did not universally supersede parochial, during the fourth century.

The gradual advances towards episcopal domination and patriarchal pre-eminence, by the monopoly of the name bishop, by the necessity of his concurrence, by the computation of successions, by the claims of ecclesiastical legislation and appellatory jurisdiction, by the exclusive but unsupported claim of episcopal ordination, by the exclusion of presbyters from councils, all of which have passed successively under our view ; and, also, by the erection of diocesan instead of parochial government, which, in the middle of the fourth century, our present place, is still incom-

plete, are obvious to every unprejudiced reader of the fathers. Nevertheless, presbyters have not been degraded from their principal employments, the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the baptismal and eucharistical ordinances, even among Episcopalians. To rescue Presbyterians from such an imputation, to which some are willing to succumb, is the object of these efforts. At a late period, upon which the finger shall be placed, as soon as it arrives, *ruling elders*, so denominated from a mistaken sense of the words *προεστωτες πρεσβυτεροι*, *presiding presbyters*, were most unwarrantably intruded into the original standing of deacons, who were thereby driven from their office. This was not a degradation of presbyters, but an encroachment of mere laymen, and equally reprehensible, who have no title to the name presbyter, nor to the employment assigned by the Holy Spirit to deacons. On a full understanding of this faulty clerical contrivance, a great portion of the American pastors ordain and consider only as deacons, those who are denominated ruling elders; and they are authorized to do so by their form of government.

The author who next succeeds is Hilary of Poitiers, who was born in Gaul near the end of the third century, and educated a heathen, but afterwards convinced, instructed, and baptized. When bishop of Pictavium, he wrote Tractates on the Psalms, and a commentary on the gospel of Matthew.

On Psalm cxxxiv. 27,<sup>a</sup> he observes, that the Psalmist means different things by the house of Israel; Aaron, Levi, and those who fear the Lord: and that, in like manner, Paul writing to the Corinthians distinguishes between the called, the saints, and those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. By Aaron, he understands the priests—"in Aaron, sacerdotes significari;" for he was first of the order under the law: by Levi, the deacons—"in Levi autem ministros ostendi;" for this tribe was chosen to attend. But the

<sup>a</sup> Hilar. Pict. Opera. vol. i. p. 413.



rest of the people, to whom the duty neither of the priesthood, nor attendance, but of fear, "*cui non sacerdotii, neque ministerii sed timoris officium,*" belonged, are designated by those "who fear the Lord." Hilary, who was himself a bishop, and knew the novel claims of such to a superiority over their presbyters, does very plainly in this passage, pass over the distinction, and account them as the same order of "*sacerdotes,*" priests, recognizing only two kinds of officers, *sacerdotes* and *ministri*, presbyters and deacons. He consequently thereby excludes lay presbyters. The sacerdotal order of the Old Testament vanished with that shadowy dispensation, and no other priest exists but Jesus Christ, who has passed into the heavens.

Hilary wrote also twelve books against the Arians, and was banished to Phrygia by the emperor Constantius, because he defended Athanasius. In Asia he wrote his *Treatise of Synods*, about A. D. 359. It is directed to his fellow bishops, *coepiscopis*,<sup>b</sup> in Germany, Belgium, &c. to the people, "*plebibus*" of the province of Narbona; to the clergy, "*clericis,*" of Toulouse; and to the bishops, "*Episcopis,*" of the provinces of Britain. Lay elders are not found in the enumeration, nor in his works, this imaginary grade not having, in the age of Hilary, found an entrance into the church.

Constantius followed his father's partialities for the Eusebian faction, and was more decisive in his preferences. Hilary, exasperated by persecution, against which his writings often inveigh, addressed the emperor in several books, which assume the style and form of letters, in language often excessively severe. In the second he observes: "I am a bishop in connexion with the Gallic churches and bishops, although remaining in exile, and to the present time dispensing communion to the church by my presbyters."<sup>c</sup> These

<sup>b</sup> Hil. Pict. vol. ii. p. 358.

<sup>c</sup> "Episcopus ego sum in omnium Gallicarum ecclesiarum atque episcoporum communione, licet in exilio permanens, et ecclesiæ adhuc per presbyteros meos communionem distribuens." Page 431.

appear consequently to have been separate churches, or single parishes, and his charge was probably of the same kind, in which there were presbyters who supplied his place. These must have administered ordinances as well as preached the gospel, and consequently were not laymen.

He was sent back to Gaul in 360, and died in 367.

There is a commentary on the epistles of Paul found at present among the works of Ambrose, which Augustine has quoted as the production of Hilary, who could have been no other than he who was a deacon of the church of Rome and a native of Sardinia. The writer of this commentary must also have written the questions on the Old and New Testaments, attributed to him, and now appearing in the fourth tome of the works of Augustine. But whether he was the author or not, the works place themselves at 300 years from the destruction of Jerusalem, discover unusual proofs of a strong and well-instructed mind, and are entitled to speak for themselves. If they have partaken in the advantages of the canonizations of Ambrose and Augustine, the honor of infallibility should prevent their condemnation with Hilary; who though denominated by Jerome a Deucalion, because a rebaptizer, did hold his very opinions on the subject before us. It is too late to subject to expurgation works which have been received by the Christian world from the reign of Valentinian the First. Also, the piety and sufferings of Hilary for the cause of Christ are abundantly proved by Athanasius.<sup>d</sup> On Ephesians, iv. 11, 12, among other things, he observes: "For also Timothy, who had been created by himself (*Paul*) a presbyter, he denominates a bishop, because presbyters were at first called bishops, seeing that one receding, the next might succeed to his place. Finally, in Egypt, presbyters confirm,<sup>e</sup> if a

<sup>d</sup> Athanasii, Oper. vol. i. p. 647.

<sup>e</sup> Whether the term *consignant* expressed the confirmation of the baptized, or the imposition of hands on those who were ordained, or on penitents, it was correctly accomplished by the presbyter in

bishop be not present. But because the presbyters who came afterwards, began to be found unworthy to hold the highest office, the custom was changed, a council "providing that not succession, but merit, should create a bishop, constituted by the judgment of many presbyters, lest an unworthy person should rashly intrude, and become an offence to many."<sup>f</sup> Hilary thought Timothy to have been by his ordination a presbyter, and also by the same ordination a bishop, because presbyters were so denominated in the days of the apostle. Moreover, he asserts, that presbyters presided successively, by which he means that they came to be *primi*, or bishops, in a more modern sense of the word, according to seniority in ordination, until by a canon of council, it was decreed, that the successor should be appointed according to merit. If presbyters were at the first bishops, and were the highest ordinary officers in the church, it is unnecessary to allege, that they were not laymen. But when this writer comes to speak of Timothy's power to ordain bishops, he expresses his views more clearly. On 1 Tim. iii. he observes, that the apostle, "after the bishop, subjoins the ordination of the deacon; why? unless the ordination of the bishop and of the presbyter is one, for each of them is a priest. But the bishop is first, seeing every bishop is a presbyter, not every presbyter a bishop; for he is a bishop, who is first among the presbyters. Finally, he represents Timothy to have been ordained a presbyter, but be-

the absence of the bishop, whose preference was founded only on custom and canons; but these could not have legalized such act of a presbyter, had his authority not been apostolical.

<sup>f</sup> Ambros. Oper. tom. iii. p. 239. "Nam et Timotheum presbyterum a se creatum episcopum vocat, quia primum presbyteri episcopi appellabantur: ut recedente uno, sequens ei succederet. Denique apud Ægyptum presbyteri consignant, si præsens non sit episcopus. Sed quia cœperunt sequentes presbyteri indigni inveniri ad primatus tenendos; immutata est ratio, prospiciente Concilio, ut non ordo sed meritum crearet episcopum, multorum sacerdotum iudicio constitutum, ne indignus temere usurparet, et esse multis scandalum."

cause he had not another before him, he was a bishop. Whence also he shows, that he may, after the like manner, ordain a bishop. For it was neither right nor lawful, that an inferior should ordain a superior, for no one confers what he has not received.”<sup>g</sup> After a few sentences, he adds:—“ But there ought to be seven deacons and some presbyters, that there may be two in every church, and one bishop in a city.”<sup>h</sup> Writing in the middle of the fourth century, this last sentence accords with the circumstances of his day, and discovers his own acquiescence in the authority of the church. Nevertheless, he shows his clear discernment of ancient facts, when he affirms, that there was but one ordination for the bishop and the presbyter, and their office the same. The presiding presbyter we have seen, came afterwards to be distinguished by the title of bishop, a name common at first to all presbyters. After this, it was correct to say, every bishop was a presbyter, but not every presbyter a bishop, because the presiding presbyter only, in every presbytery, was so denominated. Thus he accounts Timothy, who had been ordained, as he thinks, no more than a presbyter, to have been a bishop, because there was no presbyter to preside over him. The word *primus*, where it first occurs in this quotation, has been supposed to agree with *sacerdos*;<sup>i</sup> but that it governs *presbyterorum* understood, and takes its gender, is evident from his own explanation: “ *hic enim*

<sup>g</sup> Ambros. Oper. tom. iii. p. 272. Post episcopum tamen diaconi ordinationem subjecit. Quare? nisi quia episcopi et presbyteri una ordinatio est, uterque enim sacerdos est. Sed episcopus primus est, ut omnis episcopus presbyter sit, non omnis presbyter episcopus. Hic enim episcopus est, qui inter presbyteros primus est. Denique Timotheum presbyterum ordinatum significat. Sed quia ante se alterum non habebat, episcopus erat, unde et quemadmodum episcopum ordinet ostendit. Neque enim fas erat aut licebat, ut inferior ordinaret majorem. Nemo enim tribuit quod non accepit.”

<sup>h</sup> Ibidem.—“ Nunc autem septem diaconos esse oportet, et aliquantos presbyteros, ut bini sint per ecclesias, et unus in civitate episcopus.”

<sup>i</sup> Skinner, p. 219.



*episcopus est, qui inter presbyteros primus est.*" Besides, also, the superiority of Timothy is not ascribed to a higher order of priesthood, but to his being a *primus presbyter*; for since Timothy was directed to ordain bishops, he could not have done this, if, instead of being in equal grade, a "*primus*," he had been an "*inferior presbyter*." Here mention is made of inferior presbyters, but it is obviously clear, that though they had been at the period of this author canonically robbed of the right to ordain, they were not laymen, but inferiors only in relation unto the *primus*, or presiding presbyter of their bench.

On 1 Tim. v. 1, he observes, that "an aged man on account of the respect due to his years, must be excited to a good work with mildness, that he may receive more easily the admonition. For when admonished, he can be respected, lest he may afterwards be reproved, which is dishonorable to an old man. For every where, among all nations, old age is honorable, Whence also, the synagogue, and afterwards the church, have had seniors, without whose counsel, nothing was transacted in the church. Which<sup>k</sup> by what neglect it should have grown out of use, I know not, unless perhaps by the negligence of the teachers, or rather by their pride, whilst they desire to appear alone to be something. Younger men, he thinks, should be advised with the affection of regard, as if brothers, that seeing themselves admonished for the sake of love, they may more easily correct themselves, forasmuch as they may discern, that his own conduct does not disagree with his preaching. But old women must be treated as mothers"—"young women as sisters."<sup>1</sup> It is surprising, that any mind ever hap-

<sup>k</sup> "*Quod* has been rendered 'which order' by mistake. In his questions on Leviticus, No. 25, Hilary has censured *vocavit senatum*, because implying *ordinem seniozem*, and has substituted *vocavit seniores Israel*, to exclude the idea of order of office. Consequently, by *seniores habuit* he meant merely old men.

<sup>1</sup> Ambros. Oper. tom. iii. p. 276. "Propter honorificentiam ætatis majorem natu cum mansuetudine ad bonum opus provocan-



pened to conceive this passage to contain the idea of lay presbyters. That here are mentioned old men, who were lay men, is very certain; it likewise appears, that such were consulted on church affairs in ancient times, and also that Jewish synagogues were wont to do the same thing. This comment, like the text on which it was made, relates only to old men who are not presbyters. In both, they were contrasted with young men, and old women with young women. There is no mention made of office or order, in either. The idea of an order of presbyters in the comment would have been a departure from the text. The not taking their advice, is not stated to have been a violation of any right, except of the respect due to years, a thing merely optional, yet improperly omitted. No inferior presbyter in the church, has been once mentioned by any father or council prior to this writer. So far is he from alleging a general discontinuance of such a class of officers, that he never has hinted at the existence of such an officer, and for the best of reasons, because no such *order* was ever found in any Christian church before his time. Had this author known of two offices of presbyters, he would have discovered that knowledge, when arrived at the seventeenth verse of this chapter, where a diversity in the exercises of the presbyter's duty being mentioned by the apostle, it has become in modern times, the foundation of an imaginary distinction into ruling elders, and those who labor in word and doctrine. Hilary has well established the identity of the ordination of the ruling presbyter or bishop, and of the other presbyters; but

dum, ut facilius suscipiat admonitionem. Potest enim vereri commonitus ne postea corripiatur, quod turpe est seniori. Nam apud omnes ubique gentes, honorabilis est senectus. Unde et synagoga et postea ecclesia seniores habuit, quorum sine consilio nihi agebatur in ecclesia. Quod quâ negligentia obsoluerit, nescio, nisi forte doctorum desidia, aut magis superbia, dum soli volunt, aliquid videri. Juniores quasi fratres censet admonendos, cum dilectionis affectu, ut videntes amoris causâ se commoneri, facilius se corrigant; quippe cum videant non discrepare opera ejus a prædicatione. Anus vero quasi matres."—"Adolescentulas ut sorores," &c.

being unable to divine the modern construction, by some put upon this verse, he says, "Good and faithful stewards ought not only to be judged worthy of honor (*reward*) on high, but of that which is earthly, that they may not be distressed with a want of supplies, but rather rejoice in their faith and doctrine. For he becomes more assiduous, if he be not humbled by want, and his influence increases, when he perceives, that he obtains the present fruit of his labors; not that he may abound, but that he may not suffer want."<sup>m</sup> Here no distinction is made among presbyters, they being at first spoken of together in the plural. And this officer is then named in the singular, the commentator thereby plainly evincing that he understood the verse as descriptive of one office. That three centuries should have elapsed after Paul wrote this word *προεστωτες*, *ruling*, and this sentence have been read daily in the original, being, in the age of Hilary, still a living language, spoken in the fairest portion of the churches; also, that no intimation should have been given, in this or any other writer, that it described an inferior order of presbyters, is a posing fact to the advocates of lay presbyters.

Hilary, the deacon, exposes the opinion of one Falcidius, that *Levites were equal to priests, and deacons to presbyters*, announcing it as boldness and presumption, because Levites were *bajulos, porters, and deacons, ministros, servants*. He argues:<sup>n</sup> "The greater order

<sup>m</sup> "Boni dispensatores ac fideles non solum honore sublimi debent digni judicari, sed et terreno, ut non contristentur indigentia sumptuum sed magis gaudeant fide sua et doctrina. Instantior enim fit, si non humilietur inopia, et crescit in illo autoritas, cum videt se etiam in presentis laboris sui fructum percipere, non ut abundet, sed ut non deficiat." Ambros. Oper. tom. iii. p. 277.

<sup>n</sup> Quest. ci. August. tom. iv. p. 779. "Major enim ordo intra se et apud se habet et minorem, presbyter enim et diaconi agit officium et exorcistæ et lectoris. Presbyterum autem intelligi episcopum, probat Paulus apostolus, quando Timotheum quem ordinavit presbyterum, instruit qualem debeat creare episcopum. Quid est enim episcopus, nisi primus presbyter, hoc est, summus sacerdos? Denique non aliter quam compresbyteros, hic vocat et consa-

contains in it the less, for the presbyter acts the part of deacon, exorcist, and reader. And Paul the apostle proves, that a presbyter is to be understood a bishop, seeing he instructs Timothy, whom he ordained a presbyter, what kind of man he ought to create a bishop. For what is a bishop, unless a first presbyter, that is, a chief priest? Wherefore, he calls them no otherwise than his co-presbyters and co-priests.—“The order of the deacon is to receive from the priest and give to the people.”

This passage well accords with the evidence of fact, which has hitherto appeared in detail; that the priority of the bishop or first presbyter was merely adventitious, and by no means, however supported by canons, a diversity in order of office; there being originally but one ordinary preaching order in the church of Christ, which was that of presbyters; and that bishops, after every effort to elevate them by ecclesiastical authority and preferences, had no other than presbyterial ordination. If there were not different kinds of presbyters, it results, that none of them were laymen. Also, the fact, that deacons still, in the middle of the fourth century, received the bread and wine from the hands of the presbyters, and conveyed those elements to the people, clearly evinces, that there existed at that period no such intermediate grade of elders in the churches.

cerdotes suos.”—“Diaconi ergo ordo est, accipere à sacerdote, et sic dare plebi.”

## SECTION XIII.

*Athanasius was a deacon, then archdeacon, and then a bishop. The powerful opponent of Arius. Often banished and still preserved. He conformed to the canons of Nice, which gave ordination to bishops. In Alexandria there were different congregations under different presbyters, who all made one presbytery for the purpose of ordination, and had one πρεσβυτης, επισκοπος or bishop. Optatus lived in Numidia, and conformed to the government of his day; bishops, presbyters and deacons, his seniors were not officers.—Aerius accorded in views of government with Hilary the deacon, and lived in Pontus.*

ATHANASIUS excelled neither in style nor eloquence, yet in strength of understanding, clearness of conception, and choice of expression, on abstruse subjects, he was surpassed by none of that age.

That this champion against Arianism, was duly chosen and ordained to be the bishop of Alexandria, according to the customs of that church, and the directions of the council of Nice, whereof he had been a very active member but five months before, there is no reason to question. That he had attended that council as a deacon, and at the death of Alexander was an archdeacon, are clear.<sup>a</sup> But that he was at any period a presbyter, except as that office identifies itself with that of bishop, we have no where any proof, unless a general expression left by Gregory Nazianzan<sup>b</sup> can be received as such. The words of this father, compared with the views of that age exhibited in our last section, and with the circumstances recorded of the placing Athanasius in the chair, probably extended

<sup>a</sup> Athan. Oper. 2d vol. 547, 520, 521, 570.—ηδη και του των αρχidiaκων βαθμου, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Greg. Nazianz. Oper. i. vol. 376.—πασαν την των βαθμων ακολουθιαν διεξελθων.



only to the office of deacon, and his promotion to be the head of his order. His extermination was the settled purpose of the Arians, but Providence always defeated these schemes, and truth prevailed against the imperial authority which they wielded. His ostracisms were blessings to the provinces; for in every place to which he came, he was a learned and insuperable advocate of the doctrine of the Trinity. Self-defence led him to claim and exercise powers, justified only by the exigencies of his condition. Thus his refusal, upon his second restoration, to permit a single church of the Arians at Alexandria, being suspended upon the condition of a like toleration of the orthodox party in other cities, appears to have been founded in policy, rather than in right. His popularity at home, protection abroad, and long concealment from persecutors, prove that his episcopal administration, however unscriptural, had not been tyrannical.

There occurs a passage in a circular written by the Synod of Alexandria, and preserved in his second apology, wherein they defend him from the charge of breaking a chalice of certain schismatics, by denying that there was any church at the place, any celebration of the ordinance at the time, or the existence of a presbyter there, except the far-famed Ischyras, who was never chosen by a church, and when Alexander received the presbyters, who had been constituted by Miletius, he was not numbered with them: nor had he been thus set apart in that place. When therefore was Ischyras a presbyter? "By whom constituted? Was he by Collythus, since this remains? But because Collythus died a presbyter, every imposition of his hand was void, and all those who were constituted by him in the schism, became laymen," &c.<sup>c</sup> This argument is founded upon the supposition that Ischyras was not a presbyter, and therefore had no right to administer

<sup>c</sup> Vol. i. 570. Τίνος καταστησαντος; ἀρα κολλουθου, τουτο γαρ λοιπον, ἀλλα ὅτι κολλουθος πρεσβυτερος ἂν ἐπέλειψησε, καὶ πᾶσα χεὶρ αὐτου γεγορον ακυρος, &c.



the ordinance; and that he was not a presbyter, because Collythus had no right to ordain him such, "under a pretence that he was a bishop, when he was not."<sup>d</sup> The members of the synod to which the church of Alexandria appertained, were neither ignorant of that canon which confined the ordination of bishops to bishops,<sup>e</sup> nor unacquainted with the ancient government of the church of Alexandria, secured to it by the council of Nice.<sup>f</sup> Collythus did not ordain by virtue of his office as presbyter, but as if he was a bishop, who presided over presbyters, which he was not, and such he was afterwards judicially decided never to have been. It has been alleged that Ischyra had no church, had been ordained by a schismatic, and out of the diocese. There is also another ground which Athanasius has particularly stated, "Mareotes was a part of Alexandria, and there never was a bishop or chorepiscopus constituted in it, but the churches of the whole district were under the bishop of Alexandria, and each of the presbyters had their own sections."<sup>g</sup> From the first planting of the gospel in cities, one presbytery only existed in each, and when from an increase of numbers there were many places of worship, the presbyters served in the different congregations, but ordinations were performed only by the presbytery of the city, and each had its permanent president, *προεστώς*, who was afterwards called *επισκοπος*, *bishop*, a name at first common to all presbyters. If a single presbyter should exercise the power of ordination, especially within the district, over which his presbytery had always exercised that power, it was deservedly account-

<sup>d</sup> Ibid. p. 616. *υπο γαρ κολλυθου του πρεσβυτερου φαντασθητος επισκοπην, &c.*

<sup>e</sup> Council of Nice. Canon iv.

<sup>f</sup> Canon. vi.

<sup>g</sup> ὁ Μαρεώτης χώρα της Αλεξανδρείας ἐστὶ καὶ οὐδεπῶτε ἐν τῇ χωρᾷ γέγονεν ἐπισκοπὸς, οὐδὲ χαιρεπισκοπὸς, ἀλλὰ τῆς Αλεξανδρείας ἐπισκοπῶν αἱ ἐκκλησίαι πάσης τῆς χώρας ὑποκείνται, ἐκαστὸς δὲ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἐκεῖ τὰς ἰδίας καμάς.—Athanas. apol. ii.

ed a nullity, and such an unfounded claim of presidency by Collythus was properly denied him by his brethren.

The important life of Athanasius was devoted to the defence of truth, and almost all that he wrote, was in vindication of that cause which he had successfully defended in the council of Nice. A considerable portion of the tracts collected together as his works, were certainly not his, and, among the rest, the creed that goes by his name. But his genuine writings remain to this day second to no human production on the subject of the Trinity. At length he terminated his tempestuous voyage of life, A. D. 373.

About the same period lived Optatus, bishop of Milevis, a city of Numidia, who wrote six books against Parmenianus, the successor of Majorinus. After the death of Mensurius their bishop, the Christian people of the city of Carthage elected Cœcilianus, who was ordained by the neighbouring bishops; those of Numidia, who had been neglected, took offence, convened and ordained Majorinus, altar against altar. Cœcilianus was an archdeacon when ordained; and Majorinus being of the same order, his reader, received ordination.<sup>h</sup> Neither did the Donatists object this circumstance against Cœcilianus, nor the Catholics deem it an objection to the ordination of Majorinus. These facts are mentioned merely in confirmation of the similar occurrence alleged in the account of the ordination of Athanasius, being free from every imputation of informality, because the episcopal was, as we have seen, originally, and ought ever to be deemed really, the presbyterial ordination, and not of two kinds, for of presbyters there are not two kinds, which the modern notion of lay presbyters gratuitously supposes.

The classification of the clergy by this writer, perfectly accords with those of his century. In the first priesthood, he places bishops; in the second, presby-

<sup>h</sup> Optat. Lib. i. p. 18. Adhuc diaconum ordinarent Cœcilianum, p. 19. Majorinus, qui lector in diaconis Cœciliani fuerat, episcopus ordinatus est, &c.

ters; in the third, deacons, and other ministers.<sup>i</sup> When he mentions the aged men among the people, he cautiously avoids the use of the term presbyter, lest its official should be mistaken for its appellative meaning; and adopts the word *senior*, or some equivalent phrase. Thus, when relating the obedience of Mensurius to imperial process, the doubtfulness of his return to Carthage, and his anxiety about the safety of the treasures of the church, he says, "He committed them to old men deemed worthy of trust, taking an inventory of them, which he delivered to an old woman, with directions to deliver it to whomsoever she should observe to be the occupant of the episcopal chair."<sup>k</sup> It is evident that these seniors were communicants, for when the property was demanded, they withdrew from the communion; but neither resignation of office, nor deposition is mentioned. Nor does any circumstance appear that would lead to the conclusion, that they had been officers. They were selected *quasi fideles*, upon the ground of character; their being communicants and aged, were circumstances conducive to confidence; and the inventory was for still greater security, taken and intrusted to an aged woman. The last precaution would scarcely have been adopted, had they been officers, and consequently as such deemed worthy of trust by, and responsible to, the church. The peculiar circumstances of the case, the use of the word *seniores*, not *presbyteri*, the fact that presbyters at that period were second in the priesthood, added to the circum-

<sup>i</sup> P. 13. "Quid commemorem laicos,—quid ministros plurimos? quid diaconos in tertio? quid presbyteros in secundo sacerdotio constitutos? Ipsi apices et principes omnium episcopi, &c. lib. ii. p. 39. 'Certa membra sua habet ecclesia, episcopos, presbyteros, diaconos, ministros, et turbam fidelium.' Ibid. p. 46.—"Cum sint quatuor genera capitum in ecclesiâ, episcoporum, presbyterorum, diaconorum, et fidelium," &c. "Invenistis diaconos, presbyteros, episcopos, fecistis laicos."

<sup>k</sup> Ibid. lib. i. p. 17. "Quæ, quasi fidelibus, senioribus commendavit commemoratorio facto, quod cuidam aniculæ dedisse dicitur; ita ut si ipse non rediret, reddita pace Christianis, anicula illi daret quem in episcopali cathedrâ sedentem inveniret."

stance, that even the deacons were clerical, render it strange that this passage should have been thought any proof of the existence of subordinate official presbyters. That the office of "ruling elders" in protestant churches should have been attempted to be supported by those passages which in ancient writers, represent the aged of the church to have been called upon for advice or testimony, argues equal deficiency of proofs, and intemperance of zeal.

The terms *major natu* and *senior*, denoting an aged man, and thus corresponding in meaning to the Greek word *presbyter*, have been by such Latin writers as Cyprian, who was inimical to the office of presbyter, substituted for it in its official sense; but it is believed, upon careful examination, that Optatus has done so in no instance. And the supposition that at this period there were inferior to deacons, who were all preachers, certain lay officers or ruling elders, who were denominated *seniores* and *seniores plebis*, is destitute of support. Whence did they spring? Were they a species of presbyter? and if so, how came they to be laymen? By what means, and on what occasion, did the deacons rise above them? And where is the proof that there were two branches of elders, a higher and a lower?<sup>1</sup> The *seniores* in civil society, and the *seniores ecclesiæ* were evidently men of advanced age. *Ecclesiastic* may indeed be synonymous with *clerical*, but *ecclesiastici viri* signified men belonging to the church, in contradistinction unto those members of society who were not of the church. Thus in Augustine we find *presbyters* and *seniores* made parties to a suit, and of the same side, the former as officers of the church, and the latter as private citizens holding the legal title to the property or possession, claimed by them as *seniores plebis*, the representatives of the people of the church, in which respect they were *ecclesiastici viri*.

<sup>1</sup> Μη κληροθαιεν μεσσω των πρεσβυτερων εξεστω τοις διακονοις, it must not be allowed to deacons to sit in the midst of presbyters.—Council of Nice, Can. xviii.



They were more generally called *seniores plebis*, because they were neither members of the presbytery, nor were they deacons, or of the lower clergy. To them, no trust, no authority, no clerical duty is ever assigned; but in matters of moment, their opinions and sage advices were sought, and considered as the counsel of the people. This wholesome practice was not improperly followed at the reformation, as we may at some period see; but this was no apology for foisting into the church of Christ a new office, and casting out deacons, into whose place and employment, ruling elders have been intruded. But they are still properly accounted deacons, and commissioned as such in many of our churches; but where they are considered officers, *προεστώτες πρεσβυτεροι* *ruling elders*, they are improperly named, unauthorized by the New Testament, and without example in the ancient churches. Ecclesiastical government from the days of Constantine became through the influence of the council of Nice, nearly uniform throughout the civilized world. The advocates of clerical authority by uniting church and state, reared an episcopal monopoly of power, friendly to despotism, and therefore carefully cherished by the Christian emperors; but presbyters were nowhere, even in a solitary instance, reduced to the condition of laymen. In almost every writer, hitherto examined, some evidence of primitive parity in the ordinary preaching office may be found, but almost as soon as civil power took the side of Christianity, the clerical superiority, which had been gained by courtesy and claimed by usage, boasted a right to govern, and assumed a threatening aspect.

The views which Hilary the deacon has been observed to have retained of the office of presbyter or bishop, were precisely those of Aerius his contemporary, who escaped not clerical persecution, though far distant in Cappadocia or Pontus. The name of the former has been almost blotted out, that of the latter consigned to infamy and detestation. That he swerved to the Arian side is probable, but this was not the



cause of his offensiveness. Eustathius, his unequal but preferred competitor, was avowedly of the same party. He did indeed condemn prayers and offerings for the dead, and the observance of the public Jewish fasts; but his great crime lay in holding that mortifying truth, that the presbyterial and episcopal offices were originally the same, and in withdrawing from the church of Sebastia.<sup>m</sup> Augustine refers to Epiphanius, who represents him to have asked, “as to what is a bishop before a presbyter? In what do they differ? The order is the same, the honor one, and the excellence one; the bishop imposes hands, and so does the presbyter; the bishop performs the whole of public worship, and the presbyter in like manner; the bishop sits upon a throne and so does the presbyter.”<sup>n</sup> No mention is here made of any difference among presbyters. Had there existed some, who laboured not in *word and doctrine*, but were subordinate, they ought to have been excepted. Of such we have found no, not the least, intimation in any writer in ancient times. But from the earliest period, *προεστώτες*, or *presiding* presbyters, whom an apostle deemed worthy of double honor, have been of common occurrence, and at length having monopolized the name bishop, did in the age which is passing under our present examination, with the aid of the civil power, erect themselves into a superior order, against which it was the honor and infelicity of Acrius, to bear his testimony. His fate furnishes another example, that truth is a feeble defence against power. His motives we know not; if disap-

<sup>m</sup> Augustin. tom. vi. col. 25. Orare, vel offerre promortuis oblationem non oportere, nec statuta solemniter celebranda esse jejunia, sed cum quisque voluerit jejunandum, ne videatur esse sub lege, presbyterum ab episcopo nullâ differentiâ debere discerni.

<sup>n</sup> Epiphani. adv. hæres. lib. iii. tom. i. p. 906. Τι ἐστὶν ἐπισκοπος πρὸς πρεσβυτέρον; οὐδὲν διαλλάττει οὗτος τούτων. μία γὰρ ἐστὶν ἰαξίς, καὶ μία τιμὴ, καὶ ἓν ἀξίωμα. χειροβέβηται—ἐπισκοπος ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος. λουτρον δίδωσιν ὁ ἐπισκοπος, ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος, τὴν οἰκονομίαν τῆς καθρέιας ποιεῖ ὁ ἐπισκοπος, καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἄσπαστος, καθέζεται ὁ ἐπισκοπος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου, καθέζεται καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος.

pointment was his inducement, nevertheless the ground he assumed was the truth, and was supported by ample proofs; it is also very clear that the opposition which prevailed against him, was not because he was an Arian, but because he espoused a plan of reform, which ecclesiastical policy could not tolerate.<sup>o</sup> Had he only borne his testimony against the clerical abuses of his day, and not actually withdrawn from the hierarchy, he might have escaped persecution. Then ceasing to be an object of odium, he would have dropped into oblivion, the common receptacle of the names of thousands, who have succumbed unto, or perished in opposing the ecclesiastical tyranny of the ages in which they lived, preferring a good conscience and poverty of spirit, characteristics of the saints, to the worldly policy, and personal aggrandizement of the haughty successors of the despised fishermen of Galilee.

<sup>o</sup> Hooker's justification (Eccles. pol. iii. 130.) of the sentence against Acrius on account of "his fault in condemning the order of the church, and his not submitting himself unto that order," is predicated upon, either the infallibility of the church, or her authority by which she can sanctify error. If a "*madman*," [Μακισθης, Epiph.] his madness lay in following the Scriptures, and the first government of the churches; for as Stillingfleet observes (Irenicum 276,) "upon the strictest inquiry Medinas' judgment will prove true, that Jerom, Augustine, Ambrose, Sudulius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theoplylact were all of Acrius's judgment as to the identity of both the name and order of bishops, and presbyters, in the primitive church." When Potter unjustly infers from the same facts, (Church Gov. p. 193,) that, "it was the received opinion in that age, that the order of bishops was superior to that of presbyters;" he should rather have said, that such superiority was, in that age, the law of the church established against the truth, and the word of God. For the crime imputed to Acrius, appears neither to have been *error* nor *false doctrine*, but *schism*; a sin for which the church adjudges the minority in every ecclesiastical separation punishable; and the civil law, that party "which opposes itself to the religion of the state;" in the view of each, propriety of motives, and accordance of doctrines and discipline with the word of God, are so far from justifying, that the allegation has been in every other case, as well as that of the "*madness*" of Acrius, a confession of guilt.

## SECTION XIV.

*Basil the Great ; his advantages of education ; succeeded Athanasius as head of the orthodox against the Arians.—Like him, he exercised the clerical power gained by the canons.—He knew that a presbyter was originally the highest ordinary officer.—Gregory of Nazianzum complained of ecclesiastical distinctions as innovations, and shunned the convocations of bishops as causes of evil, and attributes their consecrations to a love of superiority.—Gregory of Nyssa was the brother of Basil, and accounted all who presided in the church to be presbyters.*

BASIL the Great, was a native of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia. Born about three years after the council of Nice, he received the advantages of an education at Constantinople and Athens, as well as at Antioch in Syria. The same instructions matured Basil and Julian for their different spheres in life. Basil became a presbyter, and whilst such, was elected metropolitan; this<sup>a</sup> being then deemed the order of advancement.<sup>b</sup> An ornament of the church,<sup>c</sup> in eloquence he was second to no one.<sup>d</sup> Left by the death of Athanasius at the head of the orthodox party, when Arianism possessing the government, reigned without mercy, his firmness of faith and intrepidity of conduct, overcame the pusillanimous Valens, and proved of signal advantage to the cause. He presided through the short but stormy period of about nine years, and died, A. D. 378. Placed at first over a numerous synod of bishops, he soon witnessed the dismemberment of his charge. Five provinces arose out of Cappadocia. Canonical was the offspring of civil power, and was

<sup>a</sup> Socrat. Schol. lib. iv. c. 21. Greg. Naz. Oper. vol. i. p. 785.

<sup>b</sup> Την ταξιν του βηματος. Ibid. 336.

<sup>c</sup> Της εκκλησιας ο κοσμος βασιλειος. Photius, 890.

<sup>d</sup> Ουδενος δευτερος. Idem. 378.

obliged, as yet, reasonably to succumb to it. Nyssa, the charge of Gregory, his brother, remained ; but Nazianzum, of the other Gregory, was assigned to Capadocia tertia.

Basil, who could deny himself every thing but ecclesiastical power, in a letter to Amphilochius, the metropolitan of Lycaonia, relative to churches which could be claimed by neither of them, says :<sup>e</sup> “ You yourself know, that of whatsoever sort they who preside are, of the same kind will the habits of those who are governed generally be. Wherefore, it is perhaps better that some approved person, if it be possible, be appointed to the government of the city, and allowed to manage all concerns upon his own responsibility ; only, if possible, let him be a servant of God, *a workman not to be ashamed, not looking after his own things*, but those of the many, that they may be saved.” Over the small cities and little villages, instead of a bishop’s seat, which they formerly respectively had, he thought there should be placed *πρωτοσταμενοι*, *presiding* clergy, and over the chief city a bishop ; so that Isaurus, a seat of Arianism, might be girded around, and that Basil and Amphilochius should afterwards ordain bishops as circumstances might require.

Such were the ambitious views and artful contrivances of one of the most pious, eloquent, and learned metropolitans in the latter part of the fourth century, communicated to another of the same rank, who was, no doubt, also of the same mind. Zeal against heresy was their plausible apology, thirst for domination the secret spring, and the canons of the council of Nice the basis of that authority, and the rule of its exercise, which they claimed and exerted in opposition to the word of God, and the express command of the head of the church, who had interdicted the claim of lordship over his servants.

In his commentary upon Isaiah iii. 2, on the word “ancient” (*ἡλικιω* *elder*) he observes : “ Among the things

<sup>e</sup> Basil, vol. iii. p. 422.



that are threatened, is also the removal of the elder, seeing that the advantage of his presence is not small. An elder is he, who is dignified with the first seat, and enrolled in the presbytery, bearing the character of a presbyter; especially, indeed, if he be an unmarried man, or if even, according to the law of the Lord,<sup>f</sup> *the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly, he being not self-willed, not soon angry, neither given to wine, nor filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, and of the good; sober, holy, just, temperate; holding fast the faithful word according to doctrine, that he may be able, by sound instruction, both to exhort and to convince gainsayers*; this is the elder whom the Lord will take away from a sinful people.”<sup>g</sup> This elucidation of the character of a Jewish elder, in the words of Paul’s description of a Christian bishop, evinces that Basil knew that in the days of the apostles the office was the same. The eloquent metropolitan, perceiving that the terms presbyter and bishop had been promiscuously used in the direction given to Titus, drops the latter name, and attributes the characteristics enumerated with both to the presbyter, that he might suitably represent the magnitude of the calamity expressed in the prophetic denunciation. Few in his day enjoyed or more valued clerical preferment; but its canonical origination, yet inchoate, was then so far from being a matter of concealment, that it was the vaunted basis of pre-eminence and power. The testimony of this bishop of bishops is a candid confession, that, at the first, the occupant of the highest seat in a church was a presbyter, and that such were instructed in sound doctrine, and able to exhort and convince. This proof does not even surmise the existence of presbyters of different kinds, and is, therefore, in utter exclusion of those of the imaginary inferior grade.

In his “Morals,” he classes together in one chap-

<sup>f</sup> Titus i. 6—9.

<sup>g</sup> Basil, tom. ii. p. 96.



ter, directed to the same object, the Scriptural character and duties of bishops and presbyters, taken from the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and places them under the title of "What things are said conjunctly concerning bishops and presbyters."<sup>h</sup>

The next chapter has the title, "Concerning deacons,"<sup>i</sup> and details their first appointment from the acts of the apostles, and some of their moral qualifications from the epistle to Titus. Thus he discovers his opinion, that there are mentioned in those Scriptures but two offices, presbyters or bishops, and deacons. Had there been known in his day the supposed intermediate office of mute presbyters, some intimation of them on this occasion might have been expected. But the silence of non-existence then reigned on the subject of an order in the church of which no one had conceived an idea.

Gregory, bishop of Nazianzum, the son of the first of the name and office, was the friend and companion of Basil the Great, and was affirmed, but with doubtful probability, to have been his senior. He studied in Palestine, at Alexandria, and afterward at Athens. Notwithstanding the preference attributed by Photius to Basil, the writings of no Christian father exhibit more the luxuriance of imagery, and charms of eloquence, than do those of this Gregory.<sup>k</sup> Sasima, over which he was at first appointed bishop, would be deemed, in our day, an impoverished parish. His complaints were removed, but his sphere was still limited, when, after his father's death, he was chosen bishop of Nazianzum. He went to Constantinople, A. D. 376, and four years afterwards was placed by Theodosius in the great church of that city, instead of Demophilus, who had been ejected for Arian prin-

<sup>h</sup> Ὅσα κατὰ συναφίαν εἰρηται περὶ ἐπισκοπῶν καὶ πρεσβυτέρων. Basil, tom. ii. 491.

<sup>i</sup> Περὶ διακόνων. Ibid.

<sup>k</sup> Gregorius primum Sasimorum deinde Nazienzenus episcopus vir eloquentissimus præceptor meus. Jerom. vol. i. cap. 117.

ciples, which appointment was confirmed by the first council of Constantinople.

The piety of this father forbids us to think he would have inveighed against ecclesiastical pre-eminence, if he had thought the higher clerical orders of his day founded on the sacred Scriptures; yet he complains: "How I wish there had been no *precedence*, *αξιοδρια*, no *priority of place*, *τοπου προτιμησις*, no *authoritative dictatorship*, *τυραννικη προνομια*, that we might be distinguished by virtue only. But now this right hand, and left hand, and middle, and higher, and lower; this going before, and following in company, have produced to us much unprofitable affliction, brought many into a snare, and thrust them away into the company of the goats; not only of the inferior class, but also of the shepherds, *who being masters in Israel have not known these things*.<sup>1</sup> To affirm, that the validity of ordinances depends on the truth of the grace of him who administers, is error; but to acknowledge those to be officers in Christ's church who deny him and his sacrifice, is to acknowledge men to be what they disclaim. Such was the sentiment of Gregory relative to the Arians; for speaking of the succession of Athanasius to the seat of Mark in Alexandria, he observes: "Sameness of doctrine is sameness of chair, and opposition of sentiments is also opposition of office, for the one has the name, and the other the truth of the succession."<sup>m</sup> They only are of the church who are members of the body of Christ; from them the rest are denominated, and where they are not, there is no church. In his apology to Procopius for not coming to a council at Constantinople, he thus expresses himself: "It is my desire, if the truth may be told, to shun every convocation of bishops, because I have seen the termination of no synod advantageous, not producing the removal of evils so much as the accumulation of them; for the love of strife, and jeal-

<sup>1</sup> G.eg. Naz. vol. i. p. 484.

<sup>m</sup> Idem. vol. i. p. 377.

ousy of power, if you will allow me to write it, do even exceed utterance."<sup>n</sup> In a letter to Philagrius, he says: "We are worn out striving against envy and consecrated bishops, who destroy the common peace, and subordinate the word of faith to their own love of superiority."<sup>o</sup>

In a description of the church at Byzantium, which he calls the *eye of the world*, the chain by which the east and the west are connected, and the common emporium of the faith, he observes: "Behold the bench of presbyters, dignified by age and understanding; the regularity of the deacons, not far from the same spirit; the decency of the readers; the attention of the people, as well in the men as in the women, equal in virtue."<sup>p</sup>

Here are presbyters, deacons, readers, and people. This church cannot be presumed to have been defective of any class of officers existing in other churches; yet in it inferior elders found no place. Had such a grade then existed, it is unaccountable, that in every enumeration they should have been studiously concealed.

In his twenty-sixth oration, he has said many things of the diversity of stations in the church, with eloquent persuasives to subordination, and contentedness with their respective allotments, but designedly in generals. In his allusion to 1 Cor. xii. 28, he explains *helps*, *αντιληψεις*, by *προστασιαι*, whereby he meant those who took care of weaker Christians, to counsel them, and

<sup>n</sup> Greg. N. vol. i. p. 814. Εχω μεν ουτως, ει δει ταληθες γραφειν, ωστε παντα συλλογον φυγειν επισκοπων, οτι μηδεμιος συνοδου τελος ειδον χρηστον, μηδε λυσιν κικων μαλλον εσχιικυιας, η προσθηκην. αι γαρ φιλονεικιαι και φιλαρχια αλλα οπως μητε φορτικον υπολαβης ουτω γραφοντα και λογου κρειττοτες.

<sup>o</sup> Idem. vol. i. p. 823. Κεκμηκαμεν αγωνιζομενοι προς τον φθονον και τους ιερους επισκοπους, την κοινην ομονοιαν διαλυοντας και των ιδιων φιλονεικιων το της πιστewος παρεργον ποιομενος.

<sup>p</sup> Vol. i. p. 517: Ιδε πρεσβυτερων συνεδριον πολια και συνες; τετιμημενων; διακονων ευταξιαν, ου πορρω του αυτου πνευματewν αγνωστων ευκοσμιαν; λαου φιλομαθιαν, οσον εν ανδρασιν, οσον σει γυαιξι την αρετην ομοτιμαις.

protect them when persecuted; and by *governments*, κυβερνησεις, he understood παιδαγωγια σαρκος, those who admonished persons addicted to sensuality. To conceive the idea, that these terms were used for lay presbyters, was left for a novelty to generations then future. That the office of Gregory the father, as bishop of Nazianzum, to which the son was afterwards chosen, was that of a ruling elder, or presiding presbyter, appears in his own words, when he styles himself "a little shepherd, the president of a small flock, ποιμην ολιγος, και ποιμνιου μικρου προεστηκως."<sup>q</sup> This is confirmed also by his representation of Basil as a presbyter, and a co-presbyter with himself. In a circular, preserved in the works of his son, he says, that "he would prefer no one of all those who were in honor among them, to his son Basil, a presbyter most beloved of God, του Θεου φιλεστατου υιου ημων Βασιλειου συμπρεσβυτερον."<sup>r</sup> Gregory the father, was an Antenicene bishop, and a witness of the clerical aggrandizement introduced by the first Christian emperor; yet whilst he might approve the erection of a Christian hierarchy as a security against pagan persecution, he represents facts as they really were; and has shown, that Basil was no more than a presbyter when chosen to be metropolitan of Cappadocia. Also, in the next letter, which is supposed to have been written by the son, in the name of his father, calling him "our son Basil, a co-presbyter," he acknowledges himself to be such. When his son, the pious Gregory Nazianzen, found himself an object of insidious envy with those of his own creed, he indignantly refused to retain the high office assigned him at Constantinople.<sup>s</sup> In his place Nectarius, a noble layman, was elected the first bishop of the east. Gregory's disgust has been pathetically recorded by himself in two poems.<sup>t</sup> Also, a

<sup>q</sup> Greg. Naz. Opera. vol. i. p. 785.

<sup>r</sup> Ibid. p. 786.

<sup>s</sup> Socrat. Schol. lib. v. c. viii.

<sup>t</sup> Carmen ix.



Latin translation of a lost paper appended to his works, written perfectly in his manner, and generally received, exhibits with probability both his piety and chagrin. "Possess for yourselves honors and power, things in your view of highest importance. I bid you adieu, that you may indulge your insolence, and divide by lot your patriarchates. Govern the world at your pleasure, go from place to place, casting down and raising up, for these things are your delight. You may go on, but I betake myself to God, for him I live and breathe, to him alone I look, to whom my mother gave me by vows before I saw the light, to whom I am closely bound, as well by dangers as endearing watchfulness. To him will I consecrate the sincere affections of my soul, as far as they can be rendered his, holding lonely communion with him alone."

Gregory, the brother of Basil, after having taught rhetoric, became bishop of Nyssa, in Cappadocia. Though commended for his fluency by the learned Photius,<sup>u</sup> he certainly indulged too much in allegory. The excellency of style, strength of perception, and eminency of piety, have not hitherto been appreciated; probably because he spake lightly of pilgrimages, and was a married man.

We have seen that every church, at first, had its presbytery, the presiding member of which soon monopolized the name of overseer. This parochial episcopacy, except in cities, continued till the council of Nice; but these elders were not laymen. The humble diocesan episcopacy, which had sprung up in cities, from a constant adherence to the rule that one church only should exist in one place, was then adopted by Constantine as an engine of power, and made the basis of a hierarchy, guarded by numerous canons, and placed in competition with the pagan priesthood, which it soon cast down. Attired in the sacerdotal robes, and seated on thrones, the successors of the

<sup>u</sup> ὁ ποταμὸς τῶν λόγων οὐσσῆς Γρηγόριος. Phot. Bibliothec. p. 890.



despised Galilean fishermen at length became the rulers of kings, and the lords of the world. This progress was retarded by ecclesiastical jealousies. Alternate persecutions restrained the Arians and the orthodox party, and delayed the full exercise of canonical power. Gregory Nyssen, from such, or better motives, though a bishop, and the brother of his metropolitan, writes as a pastor of a church, rather than a diocesan.

Thus he observes:† “That all should not intrude themselves into a knowledge of the mysteries, but choosing one from themselves, able to understand divine things, ἀλλὰ ἐπιλεξαντες ἐξ εαυτῶν τὸν χωρῆσαι τὰ θεῖα δυναμένον, they should submissively hear; esteeming worthy of faith whatever they should learn of him. For it is said, *all are not apostles, nor all prophets*, but this is not now observed in many of the churches. In another place, speaking of his own ordination, he says:‡ “To us has come the public ministration of the spiritual supper, ἡ τῆς πνευματικῆς ἐστιασεως λειτουργια, whom it would better become to participate with, than to communicate to others.” The feast here intended is that of the gospel, from the preaching of which he had hoped to be excused.

The proximity of Nyssa to the former residence of Thaumaturgus, adds credibility to the account he has given of the ordination of that father by Phædimus, which, he says, was in his absence, words being substituted for the hand, ἀντιχειρος. This had always been the mode pursued in ordaining presbyters, who were of one degree. When presbyters or bishops were chosen; or succeeded, they were not re-ordained in the two first centuries; and when canonical ordination arose, it was not performed by imposition of hands, but instead of such imposition, the deacons held the open gospels over the head of the party, who had been chosen by holding up hands.‡

† Greg. Nyss. Oper. vol. i. p. 220.

‡ Vol. i. p. 372.

‡ Τῶν δὲ διακόνων τὰ θεῖα εὐαγγέλια ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ χειροτονοῦμενου

He has attributed too much to Stephen, and also strangely erred in the adoption of the appellative sense of the word *deaconship*, when he says:<sup>y</sup> "Then Stephen, full of wisdom and grace, was called by the Spirit to the aid of the apostles. Let no one conceive from the word *deaconship*, τῷ διακονίας ὀνοματι, that he descended below the apostolic dignity, δευτεξευειν αυτου παρα την αποστολικην αξιων, seeing Paul acknowledged himself a deacon, διακονον, of the mysteries of Christ."<sup>z</sup>

After an apostrophe to the aged Simeon, of whom he had been discoursing, he turns to those who preside in the churches, and says: "Seeing to you, and to such as you, adorned with hoary wisdom from above, who are presbyters indeed, and justly stiled the fathers of the church, the word of God conducts us to learn the doctrines of salvation, saying, (Deut. xxxii. 7,) *Ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.*" Here those who presided in the churches, are denominated, without exception, presbyters; and the official sense is clearly exhibited by an allusion to the appellative meaning of the term. But neither episcopal superiority, nor clerical subordination, find a place. The latter had not indeed then come into existence: and though the former everywhere prevailed, and even in the writer himself, yet his early impressions guided him to the truth, and his piety rendered him denied to the empty distinctions of a perishing world.

κεφαλῆς ανεπτυγμενα κατεχουντων, &c. Zonar. p. 1002. Hippod. vol. ii. p. 249.

<sup>y</sup> Vol. ii. p. 788.

<sup>z</sup> Vol. ii. p. 890.

## SECTION XV.

*Cyril of Jerusalem, renounced his ordination of presbyter, to be ordained by an Arian, a bishop. Ambrose at first a lawyer. Compelled to become archbishop of Milan. The commentary on Paul's epistles is the work of Hilary the deacon. His opinion of the angels of the seven churches. Acknowledges a presbyter to be his co-presbyter. Disclaims the authority of an apostle and of an evangelist. Clerical bribery common in his day.*

CYRIL, bishop of Jerusalem, claimed a grade by ancient custom<sup>a</sup> of high dignity; that church also venerated by Christians as a mother, obtained an exception in the canons of the council of Nice, against the power of the Metropolitan of Cesarea. "Since custom has prevailed and ancient tradition, that the bishop in Ælia is to be honored, let him have the privileges consecutive of such preference *εχέτω την ακολουθειαν της τιμης* the proper dignity being secured to the metropolis."<sup>b</sup> But the purpose of conforming the hierarchy, in the subordination of its offices and the extent of their jurisdictions, to the imperial government, conceded to Jerusalem, through the indecisiveness of the canon, little more than the name of a preference. That Cyril was made deacon by Macarius, and afterwards ordained a presbyter by Maximus; and that Acacius the Arian Metropolitan of Cesarea, in favour with Constantius, re-ordained Cyril as bishop of Jerusalem, upon the stipulated terms, that he should first renounce his office as presbyter and officiate again as deacon, are facts too plainly testified to be resisted. This stipulation was unnecessary, if every ordination whereby a presbyter becomes a bishop is a renunciation of his office as pres-

<sup>a</sup> Τα αρχαια εθνη vide Council. Nic. can. iv.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. can. vii.

byter; but if the first office remains, then episcopal ordination resting on canons and custom only, is merely void. If re-ordination after suspension or deposition is never to be performed, it follows that the episcopal is not a re-ordination, the authority of man being the foundation of canonical ordination, whilst that of the Holy Ghost has authorized the other. The ordination of elders in presbyterian churches, must be either of deacons, or of presbyters, or a nullity; if it be that of scriptural presbyters, then as often as any such are afterwards ordained pastors, there is an equally unauthorized and merely human re-ordination. That Cyril was not *confusedly*<sup>c</sup> or *impiously*<sup>d</sup> ordained bishop, has been argued from the language of a subsequent council which pronounced him "canonically ordained by the bishops of the province."<sup>e</sup> This opinion was founded upon the validity of his ordination as presbyter, though effected by an Athanasian bishop of Jerusalem, without the sanction of the Arian Metropolitan of Cæsarea. Before the council of Nice, episcopacy was often defended by allusions to the Jewish priesthood, and their orders; the shadow being identified with the *substance*, the obsolete sacrificial economy perpetuated, and the gospel ministry clothed with the rights and prerogatives of the Levitical hierarchy. But the canons of that council, Constantine being at its head, became the supreme law of the empire, and reasons of state conspiring with clerical ambition, provided that bishops should have power and importance, proportioned to the grade of the cities over which they ecclesiastically presided. Whether the provisory canon had been violated by the bishop of Jerusalem, or of

<sup>c</sup> Sacerdotio confusa jam ordinatione suscepto. Dissertat. de vita Cyrilli. c. v. 27.

<sup>d</sup> Quorum Cyrillus, quum a Maximo fuisset presbyter ordinatus, et post mortem ejus ita ei ab Acacio episcopo Cesariensi, et cæteris episcopis Arianis episcopatus permitteretur, si ordinationem Maximi repudiasset; diaconus in ecclesia administravit; ob quam impietatem sacerdoti mercede pensatus.—Jerom. Chronico.

<sup>e</sup> Κανονιακως τε παρα των επαρχιας χειροτονηθητα. Theod. hist. 1. v. c. 9.



Cesarea, it being merely a human ordinance, and the decision of the second council of no higher authority, Cyril was in fact, not only a presbyter, but a *ruling elder*, or president of the church at Jerusalem.

In the last of his catecheses we have the priest, the presbyters, and the altar, with subordinate deacons. "You have seen a deacon furnishing water for ablution to a priest and presbyters, τῶ ἑγὼ καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις encircling the altar of God. But he furnished it not for bodily filth, for there is none, for we at first entered εσημεν the church, having no dirt on our bodies." Was this holy water?

In his catecheses, the last five of which are denominated mystagogic, those peculiarities of the Catholics, which the Protestants reject, are generally prematurely recognised. The weight of these productions as historical testimony is consequently very little; but since they have no bearing on our subject, it is unnecessary to marshal the evidence of their corruptions. The letter to Constantius is a standing monument of his weakness. In the few remains of his other writings, nothing has been found to our purpose. The letter to Augustine concerning Jerom is certainly not his, for he died about A. D. 386, whilst Jerom was living. He was an imbecile, ambitious time-server, alternately orthodox and Arian, as his interest led him. His piety must be submitted to another tribunal; but with us, neither his personal character, nor the genuineness of the writings attributed to him, have competent support from his canonization.

Ambrose was the son of a præfect of Gaul, where he was born about A. D. 340. Upon the death of his father he was brought to Rome, educated, and became a pleader of causes. Appointed governor of Liguria and Emilia, and attempting to quiet a tumult, which had arisen upon the election of a successor to the bishop of Milan, he was unexpectedly nominated and elected, and at length by the Emperor obliged to accept the office. He was baptized, and within a week became arch-bishop of Milan, A. D. 374, where he died



about 396. His works consist of five tomes in two volumes. The commentary on the epistles of Paul written by Hilary the deacon has already passed under review; the apology of David, and several other portions were the productions of others.

The bishopric of Milan adjoined that of Turin, the Milanese on the east, and the Piedmontese on the west, being divided by the river Ticino, a small branch of the Po, in the great valley in which these two dioceses lay. The influence of the bishop of Rome, was acknowledged, disavowed, and re-established alike in both, till the times of Charles the Great.

As their political government was the same, both before and after the partition of the Empire in 364, so was their ecclesiastical of the same kind. They were equally Vallenses, inhabiting the same valley, and their religion the same, both in the days of Ambrose and of Claude. And since no such sequestered primitive Christians, as some have dreamed to have existed in that valley, are once mentioned in the works of this writer, there is all the certainty that a negative admits, that there were none.

In his commentary upon the words, "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches," &c. in the Apocalypse, he observes: "We ought therefore to understand the seven angels to be the rectors or presidents of the seven churches,<sup>f</sup> because angel means messenger, and they who announce the word of God to the people, are not improperly called angels, that is, messengers."

A letter of Syricius<sup>g</sup> to the church at Milan, and the answer of Ambrose, signed also by a number of bishops and presbyters, clearly show the claim and acknowledgment of superiority in the bishop of Rome, who is denominated not only pastor and brother, but Lord. By another, Syricius appears to have written

<sup>f</sup> "Septem igitur angelos, *rectores* septem ecclesiarum debemus intelligere," &c.—Igitur hoc, quod *præsuli* ecclesiæ Ephesi a Domino dicitur, &c. Tom. v. p. 183.

<sup>g</sup> Tom. v. p. 90.

to Syrus, the presbyter of Ambrose,<sup>h</sup> to reprove him for inattention to his charge. Ambrose concurs, denominating Syrus brother and co-presbyter, “*fratrem nostrum et compresbyterum Syrum.*” The expression *conservitium*, might have been used, if the canonical had been original scriptural distinctions, for there was fellowship in their services; but *co-presbyter* fairly implies, that the archbishop was still a presbyter, which was strictly true, if he had been ordained such, because the *presiding presbyter*, “*πρεσβυτης*,” is the very highest ordinary officer named in the New Testament. Ambrose certainly had some view in which his language appeared to himself to be correct. But that he considered himself a lay presbyter is inconceivable.

That deacons served tables and instructed others in the fourth century, may be inferred from these words: “The apostles did not esteem it best to leave the word of God and serve tables, but each is an office of wisdom, for Stephen full of wisdom was chosen a deacon. Let him therefore who waits detail from him who teaches, and let the teacher invite the deacon. For the church is one body though the members be different, and necessary each to another.”<sup>i</sup> If deacons were then teachers, what were presbyters who were ever their superiors?

Ambrose exercised, but with Christian humility, all the powers, which, by the canons and customs of his day, he might claim; but his interpretation of the Scriptures relative to the offices of apostles and evangelists is very different from that which some have adopted in our day. “I do not claim the honor of the Apostles, for who (had) this, but those whom the Son of God himself chose; nor the grace of prophets, nor the authority of evangelists, nor the circumspection of pastors; but the attention and diligence concerning the divine writings, which the apostles placed last among the duties of the saints, I wish only to at-

<sup>h</sup> Tom. v. 112, cum de conservitio nostro aliquos dirigis, &c.

<sup>i</sup> Tom. iii. p. 95.

tain; for, snatched from benches of justice, and robes of government, unto the priesthood, I have begun to teach you, what I have not myself learned.”<sup>k</sup> He neither considered himself, though an archbishop, to be a successor of the apostles, nor claimed the extraordinary office of evangelist; but why he confined his claim to a part only of the pastoral office, is not discernible, unless it may be imputed to his humility.

In his day, so soon after the erection of Constantine’s hierarchy, bribery had commenced. This good man complains, “you may see every where, those whom not merit, but money has advanced to the order of the episcopate; a weak and ignorant populace, who have called to themselves such a priest. If you strictly inquire, who promoted them to be priests? they forthwith answer: I have lately been ordained a bishop by the archbishop, and given him a hundred shillings, seeing I had deserved to have the episcopal grace, which, if I had not paid, I had not been a bishop to-day. Wherefore it is better for me to bring the gold from my purse, than lose such a priesthood. I gave the gold, and obtained the episcopate; I do not doubt that I shall soon receive, if I live, the shillings which I love. I ordain presbyters, consecrate deacons, and receive gold. Lo, the gold which I gave, I have already received in my purse. Wherefore the episcopate has cost me nothing.”<sup>l</sup> This representation of archbishop

<sup>k</sup> Ambr. Tom. iv. 1. “Non igitur mihi Apostolorum gloriam vendico. Quis enim hoc, nisi quos ipse filius elegit Dei? Non prophetarum gratiam, non virtutem Evangelistarum, non pastorum circumspeditionem; sed tantummodo intentionem et diligentiam, circa scripturas divinas opto assequi, quam ultimam posuit Apostolus inter officia Sanctorum—Ego enim de tribunalibus atque administrationis infulis ad sacerdotium raptus, docere vos cœpi, quod ipse non didici.”

<sup>l</sup> “Videas, in ecclesia passim, quos non merita sed pecuniæ ad episcopatus ordinem provexerunt: nugacem populum et indoctum, qui talem sibi adsciverunt sacerdotem. Quos si percunctari fideliter velis, quiseos præficerit sacerdotes, respondent mox et dicunt, ab archiepiscopo sum nuper episcopus ordinatus, centumque solidos, ei dedi ut episcopalem gratiam consequi meruissem; quos si minime dedissem, hodie episcopus non essem. Unde, melius est





## SECTION XVI.

*Epiphanius a weak and credulous writer; intoxicated with clerical power.—His detraction of Aeriſ.—His opinion of the difference between biſhop and preſbytery; contrary to Jerom's.—His notion, that different primitive churches had different kinds of officers, without foundation, and contrary to evidence and facts.—He received the apoſtolic conſtitutions, but ſhows they were doubted.—Eusebius and Jerom ſay nothing of them; and they contain falſe hiſtory.—They profeſs to have exiſted in the life-time of Peter, and yet require to read the goſpel of John, which was written after Peter's death: and give, as officers, ſeveral who came into office after the death of the apoſtles.*

EPIPHANIUS was born in Paleſtine, about the year 332, became metropolitan of Cyprus in 366, and died in 402. Though acquainted with five languages,<sup>a</sup> he was no proficient in Attic diction, the only teſt to which he is now ſubject. His credulity might have been at leaſt compatible with ſincerity; had not his conditional promiſe of a miracle, to the empreſs, rendered even this problematical. His invasion of the canonical rights of John of Conſtantinople,<sup>b</sup> ſprang from his ſeduction by Theophilus of Alexandria, and both from the inebriating influence of eccleſiaſtical power, diſproportioned to his mental vigor. To prove heresies ſuppoſitious, which is the chief object of his writings, catalogues of biſhops are preſented, who are aſſumed to have had the ſame authority, and to have held the ſame faith, from the days of the apoſtles. It had been uſual to argue the genuineness of the goſpel faith from the identity of the doctrines retained by the church throughout the world. But, howſoever plauſibly the antiquity of doctrines might be argued, from

<sup>a</sup> Πενταγλωσσος. Jerom.

<sup>b</sup> Socrat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 9—13.



the agreement of those churches, whose successive *presidents*, *προεστώτες*, had, long before the days of Epiphanius, monopolized the title of bishops, the assumption nevertheless, that diocesan episcopacy had existed from the days of the apostles, and that there had been a sameness of power, influence, and even of name, was contrary to fact. Episcopal authority he identified with the regal and sacerdotal offices of Christ, and preposterously founded it upon the promise of God, that *Christ's throne should remain*, that of *his kingdom there should be no end*, and that *he should sit upon the throne of David*, “which kingdom he transferred unto, and bestowed, together with the priesthood, upon his servants, that is, the high-priests of the church universal.”<sup>c</sup>

Speaking of Aerius, who has already fallen under consideration, he says,<sup>d</sup> that “He alleges, to the deception of himself and his hearers, that the apostle writes to presbyters and deacons, and not to bishops:” also, that to a bishop the apostle says, “Neglect not the grace that is in you, which you received by the hands of the presbytery.” And afterwards, in another place, the apostle addresses “bishops and deacons,” so that the same person was a bishop and a presbyter. And being ignorant of the series of truth, and not conversant in ancient histories, Aerius knew not that whilst the proclamation of the gospel was a new thing, the holy apostles wrote according to circumstances. Where, indeed,<sup>e</sup> there were bishops already constituted, he wrote to bishops and deacons; for the apostles could not immediately establish every thing in order. But there was need of presbyters and deacons, since by these two, the business of a church can be accomplished. Where, therefore, no one was found worthy of an episcopate, the place remained without a bishop.

<sup>c</sup> Το βασιλειον του Δαβιδ μετασησας και χαρισαμενος τοις εαυτου δουλοις αμα τη αρχιηρω συνη, τρυτ'ετι τοις αρχιερευσι της καθολικης εκκλησιας. Her. 29. S. 4. vide Heb. v. 6. vii. 16, 25, contra.

<sup>d</sup> Vide Sect. xiii.

<sup>e</sup> Stillingfleet reads *μη φορ μεν*.

But where there was necessity, and there were those who were worthy of the office of bishop, bishops were appointed, and the numbers being few, and none being found among them to be constituted presbyters, they were satisfied, in such places, with a bishop only. But without a deacon there could not be a bishop.”<sup>f</sup>

The first charge against Aerius was, that he taught that the apostle, in the third chapter of his first epistle to Timothy, in fact enumerates the qualifications, not of bishops of the fourth century, but of primitive presbyters and deacons. To which Epiphanius, in substance, answers, that bishops and deacons, without presbyters, were ordained in some churches by reason of paucity of numbers. But if so, a single pastor and his deacons was one of the earliest conditions of the church, which is not strictly correct, as we have seen.

The second was, that to prove the offices one, he represented Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 14) as ordained a bishop by the hands of a presbytery. To this the metropolitan answers, that Timothy was *not to reprove an elder, nor hastily to receive an accusation against such*; which caution implied, that he had an authority superior to that of presbyters, to whom no such directions were given. The truth was, that Timothy, ordained by a presbytery, was constituted by Paul an evangelist, an extraordinary office, by virtue of which, like an apostle, he planted churches, and ordained presbyters or bishops, their ordination being the same. It has been shown, that as the Ephori had a *προεστως*, or *president*, who held the same office with his brethren, so in the presbytery of each church there was a *president*, *προεστως*; consequently, as it was an inflexible rule

<sup>f</sup> Φερει δε εις εαυτου πλανην—και ουκ ειδεν ο την ακολουθιαν της αληθειας αγνοησας, και ιστοριαις βαθυταταις μη εντυχων, οτι θεου οντος του κηρυγματος, προς τα υποπιπτοντα εγραφεν ο αγιος αποστολος. Οπου μεν ησαν επισκοποι ηδη. Κατασθεντες, εγραφεν επισκοποι και διακονοι ου γαρ παντα ευθως ηδυνθησαν οι αποστολοι καταστησαι πρεσβυτεραν γαρ εγενετο χρεία, και διακονων, δια γαρ των δυο τουτων τα εκκλησιαστικα δυναντο πληρουσθαι, &c. Hær. 75. S. 5.

that but one church should be allowed in one city at a time, there could, of necessity, exist but one *primus* among the presbyters, however multiplied. This officer very naturally, therefore, in the second century and later, as converts multiplied, became more influential, claimed higher authority, and monopolized the name of the bishop; a circumstance on which the policy of Constantine seized, and, accordingly, by canons of the council of Nice, availing himself of an imaginary power in the church, he erected a hierarchy, which exists to this day.

The third charge against Aerius was, that he said Paul considered (Titus i. 5—7) the same persons bishops and presbyters, calling them indifferently by either name. To this he found no answer, except the assertion, that the order of bishops is to produce, by ordination, fathers in the church, or presbyters to produce sons by the washing of regeneration; which is a mere begging of the question, and opposed by the fact of the ordination of Timothy himself by a presbytery. Modern ingenuity has sometimes allowed the name bishop, in its appellative sense, to the presbyters of Titus; but, as a name of office, to the ordainer. And this would be allowable, if a distinction of such offices could be shown by the Scriptures, or in the apostolic age; but the ruling elder was no more than a presbyter; and to account him less, was an absurdity of more modern invention.

The argument just mentioned by Epiphanius, in support of an inequality between the bishop and presbyter, “that one is an order generative of fathers, for it begets fathers in the church; and that the other, unable to produce fathers, generates children in the church, by the washing of regeneration,”<sup>s</sup> has neither foundation in the Scriptures, nor in the history of the earliest ages of Christianity; for we have seen how

<sup>s</sup> Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶ πατεράων γεννητικὴ τάξις, πατερας γὰρ γεννᾷ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. Ἡ δὲ πατερας μὴ δυναμένη γεννᾶν, διὰ τῆς τοῦ λουτρῶ παλιγγενεσίας τέκνα γεννᾷ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. Hæc. 75, 84.

episcopacy grew out of the "ruling elder." But in his day, though the bishop had all the powers of the presbyter, the presbyter was not allowed to do all that the bishop might; being prohibited by the canons of councils, which were the supreme laws of the empire. Accordingly, Jerom, his more learned cotemporary, commenting on the third chapter of Zephaniah, attributes to presbyters their original right of ordination: "Priests, who baptize and administer the eucharist, anoint with oil, impose hands, instruct catechumens, constitute Levites and other priests, have less reason to take offence at us explaining these things, or at the prophets foretelling them, than to ask of the Lord forgiveness."<sup>h</sup> If it be objected that Jerom elsewhere said, "What does a bishop, ordination excepted, that a presbyter may not do?"<sup>i</sup> the answer is obvious: Jerom, knowing that episcopal ordination was an aggression canonically adopted, confirmed by successive councils, and established by imperial authority, here speaks of ordination as it then was, and by no means of its original institution, or the mode of its primitive administration. He could not otherwise have affirmed, as he has done, that bishops *are above presbyters rather by custom, than by the truth of a divine disposal*; "*magis consuetudine quam dispositionis Dominicæ veritate presbyteris, esse majores.*" He also affirmed, an apostle had plainly taught, *that presbyters and bishops were the same*, "*eosdem esse presbyteros quos et episcopos;*" but "that afterwards it obtained that one was chosen, who might preside over the rest, to prevent division, lest each one, collecting to himself, might rend the church of Christ."<sup>k</sup> That there was but one ordi-

<sup>h</sup> Sacerdotes qui dant baptismum et ad eucharistiam Domini imprecantur adventum, faciunt oleum chrisimatis, manus imponunt, catechumenos erudiant, Levitas et alios constituunt sacerdotes, non tam indignantur nobis hæc exponentibus et prophetis vaticinantibus, quam Dominum deprecantur. Tom. v. p. 218.

<sup>i</sup> "Quid enim facit exceptâ ordinatione, episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat." Tom. ii. p. 624.

<sup>k</sup> "Quod autem postea unus electus est qui cæteris preponere-



nation for the presbyter and bishop until the Cyprianic age, has been made sufficiently clear in the former sections; but to establish that Jerom excepted ordinations from the powers of presbyters, merely with regard to the laws and practice of his day, and not as either original or rightful, it is only necessary further to observe, that in the same letter he has shown, that “at Alexandria, from the evangelist Mark, even to the bishop Heraclius and Dionysius (A. D. 246) the presbyters called him bishop, who was one chosen from themselves, and placed in a higher grade, as an army makes a general, or deacons choose from themselves one, whom they know to be diligent, and call him an arch-deacon.”<sup>1</sup> A secondary ordination had not then obtained, but the elders selected one of their number, and denominating him bishop, they placed him in the chair, which Jerom describes by the suitable terms, *in gradu excelsiori collocare*: in consequence of which, he acted as bishop, or rather as arch-bishop. This act of the presbyters was without apostolical warrant, either in precept or example; and certainly grew out of the appointment of a chairman, or *προεστως*, which was a merely optional appointment, by presbyters, of one of their number to a necessary duty. The comparison of a general, discovers the manner of the election; that of the arch-deacon, excludes the idea of diversity in office; and as he was still a deacon, the bishop was still a presbyter.

tur, in schismatis remedium factum est; ne unusquisque ad se trahens Christi ecclesiam rumperet.” Epist. ad Evagrium.

<sup>1</sup> Nam et Alexandriæ à Marco evangelistâ usque ad Heraclum et Dionysium episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum in excelsiori gradu collocatum episcopum nominabant; quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat, aut diaconi eligant de se quem industrium noverint et archi-diaconum vocent.” Ibid.

Also, Hilary the deacon, says, “Sed quia cœperunt sequentes presbyteri indigni inveniri ad primatus tenendos *immutata est ratio*, prospiciente concilio, ut non ordo, sed meritum crearet episcopum. Sect. xii. And Augustin speaks of the superiority of the bishop as that which *jam ecclesiæ usus obtinuit*, &c. Isodore of Spain says, it was to prevent schisms *by authority*. It was, therefore, human, and by no means primitive.



The method adopted by Epiphanius to support, as original, an imaginary diversity in office, between bishops and presbyters, by supposing the modes of constituting the first churches to have been various; that, in some churches, there were presbyters and deacons, in others bishops and deacons, was not founded in fact; for the same identical persons were denominated presbyters and bishops: the commission was one, conferred by the same authority, in the same manner, and for the same ends.

This passage has been brought to prove, that it was believed, in the days of Epiphanius, that episcopal superiority over presbyters was established by the apostles. The imbecile arch-bishop of Cyprus, and his contemporary, arch-bishop of Milan, whose piety was much greater than his knowledge, may have thus quieted their consciences, but the episcopal power was then well known to have been founded in aggression, and established by canons of councils and edicts of emperors. Yet in no instance were presbyters reduced to the condition of laymen.

The representation already given<sup>m</sup> of the churches in Alexandria, while under their respective presbyters, at the head of whom was the president of the original church, is fully confirmed by Epiphanius. "They say that he, (Arius,) a Lybian by descent, having become a presbyter in Alexandria, presided, *πρῶτος*, over a church called Baucalis. For as many churches as are of the Catholic church at Alexandria, are under one arch-bishop; and over these, individually, presbyters are placed to administer to the ecclesiastical exigences of the neighboring inhabitants."<sup>n</sup>

This writer is deemed the principal witness in support of the eight books, denominated the Apostolical

<sup>m</sup> Sect. xiii.

<sup>n</sup> Φασιν αὐτὸν Διβὸν τῶ γένει ἐν Ἀλεξάνδρῃα δεπρεσβυτέρῳ γεγονῆτα ὡς πρῶτος τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς Βαυκαλεῶς, οὕτω καλεσμένης. Ὅσαι γὰρ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐν Ἀλεξάνδρῃα ὑπὸ ἑνὶ ἀρχιεπισκόπῳ εὐσαι, καὶ κατὰ ἰδίαν ταύταις ἐπιπέλαγμενοι εἰς πρεσβυτέρῳ διατὰ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς χρεῖας τῶν οἰκιστῶν. Hæc. 69. S. 1.

Constitutions. He observes: "The Audians bring as proofs the Constitution of the Apostles, being indeed with many not accredited, nevertheless not to be rejected; for the whole canonical order is comprehended in it, and nothing hostile to the gospel, nor to the administration, canon, or faith of the church."° Afterwards he says, "The church observes the feast of the passover, appointed even from the apostles, in the *διαταξεις, constitution, &c.*"<sup>p</sup> "And if it becomes us to recite that of the *διαταξεις, constitution* of the apostles, how, &c."<sup>q</sup> He also says: "With respect to the beard, the divine word and doctrine direct in the constitutions (*εν ταις διαταξεσι*) of the apostles, not to corrupt it," &c.<sup>r</sup> That there existed a book in the days of Epiphanius, known by the name that has been mentioned, is a fair inference from his expressions. The silence of Eusebius, and of Jerom, who was the friend of Epiphanius, avails nothing against this positive testimony; but when compared with the suspicions, which Epiphanius more than once has expressed, the inference is just, that they allowed them not to be genuine. The circumstance, also, that he never mentions them in the catalogues of the sacred writings, evinces that he did not believe them to have been written by the apostles, whose inspiration extended to all they said and wrote, relative to the cause of Christ.

They have been mentioned in no passage in the sacred Scriptures, by none of the fathers, councils, or ecclesiastical writers of the first century;<sup>s</sup> although the things they contain must have been highly impor-

° Εις τουτο δε οι αυτοι Αудиανοι παραφερουσι την αποστολων διαταξιν, ουσαν μεν τοις πολλοις εν αμφιλεκτω, αλλα ουκ αδοκιμον, πασα γαρ εν αυτη κανονικη ταξις εμφορεται, και ουδεν παρα κεχαραγμενον της πιστewος, ουδε της εκκλησιαστικης διοικησεως, και κανονος, και πιστewος.—  
Hær. 70. S. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Ibid. S. 12.

<sup>r</sup> Hær. 80. S. 7.

<sup>q</sup> Hær. 75. S. 6.

<sup>s</sup> Vide Sec. vii. ante, concerning "The Apostolical Tradition," referred to Hippolytus, which identifies itself with the 8th book of the Constitutions.

tant on different occasions, particularly to Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian. In the Constitutions<sup>t</sup> there is a direction to read the gospel of John, but that gospel was not written till after the deaths of Peter and Paul, and other apostles, in whose time and presence these Constitutions claim to have been written. Simon Magus is asserted in the Constitutions,<sup>u</sup> to have been baptized by Philip the apostle, but the history of the Acts shows that it was by Philip the deacon or evangelist.

In the Constitutions,<sup>v</sup> the apostle Peter is made to speak of Clement, as bishop and citizen of Rome, and also of the heretic Basilides, and others. But neither was Clement, bishop of Rome, nor Basilides known as a heretic in the life-time of Peter.

They contain<sup>w</sup> many names of bishops ordained by Peter, Paul, Mark, and others, several of whom must have come into office after the days of the apostles.

If those books in the Greek language, which are now called "The Apostolical Constitutions, by Clement," *Διατάγαι των αγίων Αποστολων δια Κλημεντος*, be the same which Epiphanius approved, and the Trullian council afterwards rejected, they are an argument of his weakness and prejudices; if they are different, they merit no regard, and, under either aspect, they become a miserable specimen of human depravity.

<sup>t</sup> Lib. vi. c. 7.

<sup>v</sup> Lib. vi. c. 8.

<sup>u</sup> Lib. vi. c. 7.

<sup>w</sup> Lib. vii. c. 58.

## SECTION XVII.

*Dionysius, the Areopagite, was not the writer of the volumes, which bear his name; both things and terms are freely used in them, which existed not till centuries afterwards. They may have been written in the fourth or fifth century. That the writer spoke falsely with respect to his age and time is certain; but wrote with more than ordinary talent. By what writers presbyters were first accounted priests. The mode of ordination of a bishop in them differs from that in the apostolical constitutions.—John Chrysostom, his character. Correct as to the origin of episcopacy, but mistakes some Scriptures.—Isidore of Pelusium, a monk and layman; his letters laconic and severe. Uses *ἐπισκοπος* and *πρεσβυτης* in the same sense.*

DIONYSIUS, the Areopagite, who heard Paul at Athens,<sup>a</sup> has been deemed by Nicephorus, Gregory the great, Baronius, and many others, the writer of the books which bear his name. According to these, he received a liberal education, and went into Egypt a little before the death of Christ, where he witnessed that eclipse of the sun which happened at the crucifixion, when the moon was full. The writer affirms, he was then in his twenty-fifth year; he nevertheless appears to have survived Ignatius and Trajan. The genuineness of these writings, which have received the scholia of Maximus, and paraphrase of Pachymeras, in the Greek; and the annotations of Corderius in Latin, has been a matter of dispute through the last twelve centuries. The reasons furnished by Baronius, wherefore they were not mentioned by Eusebius and Jerom, are plausible; and his opinion, that the Clement named in them was not Alexandrinus, is probable. But his answer to the objection of Theodorus, preserved by Photius, that they exhibit an account of

<sup>a</sup> Acts xvii. 34.

those traditions which grew up in the church, by degrees and at distant periods, is unsatisfactory. Neither is it conceivable that these books, which so plainly assert the doctrine of the Trinity, should never have been cited in the disputes with the Arians, nor that Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine, who mentioned the Dionysius of Athens, should have concealed, if acquainted with, his writings.

These works are probably those of a Platonistic Christian, mystically but argumentatively written, in good style, and with a free use of terms introduced by the disputants of the fourth century. Some have imagined that Dionysius, not the Areopagite converted by Paul, but the patron of the Franks, who were different men, of different periods, was the author of these works.

About the commencement of the fifth century we may with probability place them;<sup>b</sup> and supposing them the works of an anonymous and disingenuous writer, yet was he a man of more than ordinary talents and information; they are entitled to notice therefore, subject to these qualifications.

Not a solitary instance has been observed, rejecting the captions, wherein this writer uses the words *ἐπίσκοπος*, *πρεσβυτερος*, *διακονος*, *bishop*, *presbyter*, or *deacon*; but instead of them, *ιεραρχης* *ιερευς* and *λειτουργος*, *governor of priests*, *priest and minister*; *ιεραρχης* is a refinement upon *αρχιερευς* not found in the New Testament: *ιερευς* never there occurs for an officer under the gospel, nor *λειτουργος* for the deacon.

The term priest does rarely, if in any instance, appear for an officer in the church of Christ, in Clemens Rom., Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandr., Origen, Gregory Thaum., Lactantius, or in either of the Hilarys. Irenæus infers from Levi's having no inheritance but the priesthood, that the apostles, forsaking the

<sup>b</sup> Blondel and Lardner places them at A. D. 490. Pearson, 330. S. Basnage and Daille, 520. Cave, 360. And others at different intermediate periods.



fields, became the priests of God. Tertullian argues, that because Christ, is a high priest, those who are baptized into Christ, having put on Christ, are, according to the apocalypse, priests to God the Father. But neither of these writers has usually adopted the word priest for presbyter in his writings. Minutius Felix observes, that Christians had neither temples nor altars except their hearts, nor images, nor purple, nor dignities. Cyprian and Ambrose have used the terms priest and priesthood for the preaching office in the gospel, but do not ordinarily make the substitution.

The principal and distinguishing character of the ordination of a *bishop*, *ιεραρχης*, at the time of the writing of these books, appears to have been, "the imposition of the Scriptures upon his head, which neither of the lower orders received."<sup>c</sup> But it was at this period accompanied by laying on of hands, which neither appears in the constitutions, nor in the Traditions of Hippolytus.<sup>d</sup> The present form of the ordination of bishops fell into practice at some later period, by the mere omission of that which was the earliest but unauthorized ceremony, of holding the Scriptures over the head of a presbyter, when appointed to preside.

If imposition of hands is thought in our day to communicate either gifts or graces, experience will prove the reverse. And in the ordination of the *ιεραρχης*, it was not originally a constituent. Ordination, even when rightful, confers neither knowledge nor purity; and though at first followed by extraordinary gifts, it was no doubt intended as an exclusion of persons unqualified from the offices of presbyter and deacon. Designations to presidency among presbyters were variously effected in different places. The duties were long merely parochial, even after the name of bishop

<sup>c</sup> Εξαιρετα δε και εκκριτα τοις Ιεραρχαις μεν η των λογικων επι κεφαλης επιθεσις ουκ εχοντων τουτο των αφειμενων ταγματων. Vol. i. p. 364.

<sup>d</sup> Vide p. 64 ante.

had been monopolized. We have already seen, that instead of a *jus divinum*, diocesan bishops, as such, had no existence in the apostles' days: and the tardy advancement towards a secondary ordination shows that they knew that their legitimate authority was only presbyterial, whilst their episcopal superiority, being founded on human appointment, was continued by custom and supported by policy. Such is the history of the *προεστως*, or ruling elder.

It has been often affirmed in our own day, that bishops are successors to the apostolic office. But the writer of these books thought otherwise, and probably wrote the sentiments which prevailed at the commencement of the fifth century. He represents deacons as directed "by priests, priests, by archbishops, archbishops by the apostles and the successors of the apostles."<sup>e</sup>

Neither in the *Celestial* nor *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, nor in any other of the writings ascribed to Dionysius, the Areopagite, has there been found a word, a fact, or even a circumstance, which so much as excited the idea of a lay presbyter, or ruling elder, in the modern meaning of those terms.

John of Constantinople was born at Antioch, of Christian parents, but lost his father in childhood. His first object was jurisprudence, which he exchanged for the study of the Scriptures. Becoming a reader, he discharged the duties with such acceptance that he could escape episcopal ordination only by concealment. He retired a few years, afterwards was ordained deacon, then presbyter. His eloquence, upon the death of Nectarius, promoted him to the see of Constantinople, in 398. He was austere, choleric, distant, arbitrary, and sometimes imprudent, yet pious.  
<sup>f</sup> He died, in unjust banishment, in 407, at the age of

<sup>e</sup> Λειτουργοι, δε τυτοις οι κερεις, κεραρχει δε τοις κερεισι, δε τοις κεραρχεισι οι αποστολοι, και οι των αποστολων διαδοχει. Vol. ii. p. 113.

<sup>f</sup> Vide Socrat. Scholast. lib. vi. c. 2—19.

60. The name Chrysostom was conferred at a later period. <sup>g</sup>

In his homily on Ephes. iv. he places apostles first, prophets second, evangelists third; then follow pastors and teachers. These last he supposed to have been intrusted, some with a whole nation, and others to have been inferior. This archbishop of Constantinople appears to have made no claim to apostolical succession. Yet by virtue of canons of councils, he exercised the ecclesiastical power proportioned to the grade of his metropolis.

Having recited 1 Tim. iii. 3—10, he observes: "Having spoken of bishops and characterized them, saying both what they should possess, and from what they should abstain, and omitting the order of presbyters, Paul has passed over to the deacons. But why is this? Because there is not much difference. For these also in like manner have been set over the teaching and government of the church, and what things he has said concerning bishops, the same also he intended for presbyters; for they have gained the ascendancy over them only in respect of ordaining, and of this thing also they appear to have robbed the presbyters."<sup>h</sup> The condition of the church could have then been better known to no one than to this primate; yet when discoursing on the Scriptures, he expressly allows government and doctrine to have been given equally and by the same means to presbyters and to bishops; that the latter had gained the ascendancy only in ordination, which they had injuriously taken from the presbyters; for such is the force of *πλεονεκτειν*, followed by an accusative.

<sup>g</sup> ὁ χρυσοῦς τὴν γλώττην καὶ τὸ στόμα Ἰωάννης ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐπίσκοπος. Photius, fol. 890.

<sup>h</sup> Τι δὴ ποτε; ὅτι οὐ πολὺ τὸ μέτρον, καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ διδασκαλίαν εἰσὶν ἀνδιδείγμενοι καὶ προσηλασίου τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ ἀπερὶ ἐπισκοπῶν εἶπε, ταῦτα καὶ περὶ πρεσβυτέρων ἀρμοστέ. τὴν γὰρ χειροτονίαν μόνον αὐτῶν ἀναβιβήκασι, καὶ τοῦτο μόνον δοκοῦσι πλεονεκτεῖν τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους. Vol. ix. p. 1574.

He appears to have rightly conceived of the identity of the episcopal and presbyterial commission in their origin. Yet because by the canons of councils, which were the supreme law of the empire, an ecclesiastical authority had been erected in every city proportional in dignity and influence to the magnitude of the city, and the degree of civil power conferred upon it, this writer discerned that the cautious exercise of the power of ordination was a matter of the highest importance. For having spoken of a solemn charge given to Timothy, he observes, "After saying this, (*Paul*) introduced that which is above all things vital, and conduces to the preservation of the church, I mean ordination, and says, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man.'"<sup>i</sup>

It is obvious that bishops differed only in the power of ordination from presbyters, and had gained this after the first times, yet he has expressed a sentiment on Phil. i. 1. somewhat different. If presbyters were in the days of Chrysostom equally as the bishops commissioned to preach and govern, they were not lay presbyters.

Upon 1 Tim. v. 17. Chrysostom plainly shows that the presbyters who ruled well were the same species of officers with those who *laboured in word and doctrine*, and observes, "That it conduces greatly to the edification of the church, that the *προεστώτες*, *ruling presbyters*, should be apt to teach."<sup>k</sup> The "double honour" he understood to mean not merely *respect*, but *the provision necessary to him who presides*.<sup>l</sup> He also thought the portion was to be *double*, either to enable him to

<sup>i</sup> Εἶτα τοῦτο εἶπεν ὁ πάντων μαλιστα κειρατάλιον ἢ ἐπιγραφε, καὶ ὁ μαλιστα συνέχει τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ τῶν χειροτονιῶν. Hom. xvi. p. 1611.

<sup>k</sup> Πρὸς ἐκκλησίας οἰκοδομὴν καὶ πολὺ συνέχει τοὺς διδασκτικούς εἶναι τοὺς προεστώτας. p. 1605.

<sup>l</sup> Τιμὴν ἐλάττω τὴν θεραπείαν λέγει τὴν τῶν ἀναγκαιῶν χορηγίαν. Ibid. This comparison of the *προεστώτες* to him that leads in the choir, fitly intimates the parity of office.



supply widows and deacons, or because he presided well.

He understood the grace of God which was in Timothy by the imposition of his hands, (2 Tim. i. 6,) not to be his office to rule and preach, but the influence of the Holy Spirit. The imposition of the hands of the presbyters, he deems the giving of the commission, but strangely and gratuitously affirms that Paul “*there speaks not of presbyters, but of bishops.*”<sup>1</sup> That there were no diocesan bishops, and that the same officers were indifferently called presbyters and bishops at that period, are certain. Yet this evasion was not worse than making *πρεσβυτεριον*, *presbytery*, an office which Calvin favored, with some of the Latin fathers. The same arbitrary interpretation of *elders*, *πρεσβυτερουσ*, he adopted on Titus i. 5, “*he here means bishops.*”<sup>m</sup> Jerom’s views were contrary, and they are established by evidence.

Referring to the passages in the letters to Timothy and Titus, he assigns his reason for such interpretation in his first homily on the epistle to the Philippians. “To the co-bishops and deacons, what is this? Were there many bishops in one city? By no means; but he thus denominates the presbyters, for they had hitherto held those names in common; the bishop was also called a deacon,” or minister.<sup>n</sup> He afterwards justifies such commutation of names of office in ancient times, by the custom, in his own day, of bishops writing to their “co-presbyters” and “deacons,” and supposes that in former times each was, notwithstanding, distinguished by his proper official title. But how destitute of proof this assumption was, we have already abundantly seen. Also, he acknowledges there had not been either deacons or presbyters prior to the

<sup>1</sup> Ου περι πρεσβυτερων φησι ενταυθα αλλα περι επισκοπων. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

<sup>m</sup> Τους επισκοπους ενταυθα φησι. In loc.

<sup>n</sup> Συνεπισκοποις και διακονοις τι τουτο; μίας πολεως πολλοι επισκοποι ησαν; ουδαμως αλλα, τους πρεσβυτερουσ ουτως εκαλεισε τῶς γαρ τῶς εκοινωνου τοις ονομασι και διακονος ο επισκοπος ελεγετο. In loc.



appointment of Stephen and the other six, and has given it as his opinion on Acts vi.<sup>o</sup> that the commission was of a special nature, and though their duties were in the first instance ministerial, yet they were designed to be preachers, and did go forth as such.

Isidore of Pelusium flourished in the first part of the fifth century, and having adopted the monastic life, he directed letters to men of various characters and in different stations, even to the emperor himself. Some officiously reprove in pungent language; others temperately answer the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, who sought his counsel. Being in no instance entire, they appear as extracts or abridgments, laconically written. He avows the deliberate purpose of speaking freely, and causing men of no sensibility to blush for sin; and if he should thereby suffer, it would be with the prophets, apostles, and saints, an event desirable for him *who was one of the multitude*, ενι των πολλων ουτι.<sup>p</sup>

His numerous letters against simony show it to have been then a common vice. He charges it on Eusebius, the bishop of Pelusium, whom he admits to be προεστως, but denies that he, ιερασθαι, renders the spiritual service of priest.<sup>q</sup> The early corruptions of the hierarchy are sufficiently evinced in his letters, which accord with the state of the church after the erection of diocesan episcopacy, and the general adoption of the canons of the council of Nice into practice. He uses the words επισκοπος, προεστως, and ιερευς, promiscuously for the same office; but the last of these words most frequently both for bishop and presbyter. Nor has a presbyter been found in the volume, who was not a priest. Deacons and readers are often mentioned, but neither arch-bishop nor patriarch has been

<sup>o</sup> Οθεν ουτε διακοναν, ουτε πρεσβυτερων ειμαι το ονομα ειναι δηλον και φανερον. Αλλα τως εις τους εχειρλινηθησαν, και ουκ απλας ενεχειρισθησαν αλλα επευξαντο αυτους γενεσθαι δυναμιν—αυτως ενεχειρισθησαν ουτοι τον λογον. Acts hom. xiv.

<sup>p</sup> Page 664.

<sup>q</sup> Page 326.

observed. Yet he repeatedly assigns a pre-eminence to Peter above the other apostles. This work, though of small importance in the history of the church, is, nevertheless, by its numerous, brief, and often singular expositions of difficult passages in the Scriptures, rendered highly interesting.

## SECTION XVIII.

*Jerom ; his birth, education, places of residence, employment, learning, and death.—His opinion of the changes which had obtained in the offices and government of the church.—The ambition of presbyters produced the necessity of transferring much of their authority to a president in each church.—This was effected gradually, and by custom.—Jerom was contented with the church government established by canons of councils, which had the force of the supreme authority of the empire ; his denial of the primitive, or inspired right, was to take away the unjust defences of clerical improprieties.—His letter to Evagrius translated.—The church at Alexandria.—The expressions of Jerom on different occasions explained.—The importance of maintaining the succession of presiding presbyters, to exclude heretics ; but there was no re-ordination of presbyters till the Cyprianic age, or middle of the third century.*

JEROM was born in the upper confines of Dalmatia, before A. D. 345. After preparatory instructions at Stridon, and great progress in philology at Rome, he went into Gaul in quest of higher proficiency. Having returned from Rome, where he had been baptized, he proceeded to Antioch and Jerusalem. In Syria he devoted four years to the prosecution of oriental languages.

At Antioch, he sided with Paulinus, by advice from Damasus, bishop of Rome, and A. D. 375 consented to be ordained presbyter, but not to serve as such. Thus at liberty, he chose Bethlehem as his residence, whence he visited Gregory Nazianzen at Constantinople. In 382, coming to Rome, he was detained by Damasus, to whom his knowledge of languages, the Scriptures, and the world, seemed indispensable.

Upon the demise of the bishop of Rome, he retired to his beloved Bethlehem, with a number of recluses.

After visiting Egypt, he spent the residue of a long life in retirement at Bethlehem with his chosen friends, and died about 420.

Devoted to study,<sup>a</sup> and unrivalled in learning,<sup>b</sup> he shared the esteem of the greatest and best;<sup>c</sup> but as he needed no emolument, he coveted no preferment in the church. He acquiesced in the aggrandizement and influence of the ecclesiastical establishment, because he thought the exercise of power necessary to the government of the church; but he would have the superior clergy to remember, that by the word of God they were only presbyters, and that all higher authority was founded only on custom.

In writing a translation and a commentary upon the Scriptures, which were to continue to remote generations, we naturally expect his most matured judgment; and, therefore, begin with his observations on Titus i. 5, &c. "Let us carefully consider the words of the apostle: '*that you may appoint presbyters through the cities as I directed you;*' who, describing afterwards the character to be ordained a presbyter, and having observed, '*If any be blameless, not a polygamist,*' &c. then subjoined, '*for it becomes a bishop to be blameless, as a steward of God.*'<sup>d</sup> A presbyter is the same, therefore, as a bishop; and before there arose, by the temptation of the devil, preferences in religion, and it was said among the people, '*I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas,*' the churches were governed by a common

<sup>a</sup> "Totus semper in lectione, totus in libris est." Sulp. Serv. p. 506.

<sup>b</sup> "In omni scientia nemo audeat comparari." Id. 504.

<sup>c</sup> "Plane eum boni omnes admirantur et diligunt." Id. 506.

<sup>d</sup> "Idem est ergo presbyter, qui et episcopus, et antequam diaboli instinctu, studia in religione fierent, et diceretur in populis; *Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollos, ego autem Cepha*: communi presbyterorum concilio, ecclesiæ gubernabantur. Postquam vero unusquisque eos, quos baptizaverat, suos putabat, non esse Christi: in toto orbe decretum est ut unus de presbyteris electus superponeretur cæteris, ad quem omnis ecclesiæ cura pertineret, et schismatum semina tollerentur. Hierom. Oper. tom. vi. p. 198.

council of presbyters. But afterwards, every one esteeming those whom he had baptized as his own, not Christ's, it was decreed, throughout the world, that one chosen from the presbyters should be placed above the rest, to whom the care of the whole church should belong, and the source of all discord be removed. If it be supposed this is not the sense of the Scriptures, but my own opinion, that bishop and presbyter are one, and that one is the name of age, the other of office, read again the words of the apostle to the Philippians—*Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, grace to you, and peace,* &c. Philippi is a single city of Macedonia, and certainly there could not be in the one city many bishops, in the present meaning of the term. But because at that time they called the same persons bishops whom they called presbyters, on that account he spoke of bishops indifferently as of presbyters. This may still seem doubtful to some, unless it be proved by another testimony. It is written in the Acts of the Apostles, that when he had come to Miletus, he sent to Ephesus, and called the presbyters of that church, to whom he afterwards said, among other things, *Attend to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath placed you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord, which he has gained by his blood.* And here observe more particularly, that inviting the presbyters of the one city, Ephesus, he afterwards calls the same bishops. If that epistle which is written to the Hebrews under the name of Paul, be received, there also the care of a church is equally divided among many; forasmuch as he writes to the people, *Obey your leaders, and be in subjection, for they watch for your souls, as rendering an account, lest they may do this with sorrow; since this is to your advantage.* And Peter, who derived his name from the firmness of his faith, speaks in his epistle, saying, *Wherefore the presbyters among you I intreat, who am a co-presbyter, and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also an associate in the glory which is here-*



after to be revealed ; feed the Lord's flock, which is among you, not from necessity but choice."<sup>e</sup>

"<sup>f</sup> These things are recorded, that we may show, that the ancient presbyters were the same as the bishops, but by little and little, that the roots of dissensions might be torn up, the whole trouble was devolved on one. Wherefore, as presbyters know that they are subjected to him who shall have been placed over them by the custom of the church, so the bishops may know that they are greater than presbyters, rather by custom than by the verity of the Lord's appointment ; and that they ought to govern the church in common, imitating Moses, who, when he had it in his power to preside over the people of Israel alone, selected seventy, with whom he might judge the people."<sup>g</sup>

Jerom imputes the origin of episcopacy, not to the preference of one *apostle* to another, in the church of Corinth—*I am of Paul, &c.* ; for no one of them became superior in office to the rest ; but to the capricious favoritism of the people for particular *presbyters*, and to the ambitious efforts of those officers, who aimed to promote themselves rather than to advance the cause of Christ, which, he asserts, produced the general consent, by little and little, to transfer the responsibility of superintendence from the council of presbyters to a single presbyter in each church, for the prevention of divisions. From his expressions, "Before—it was said among the people, *I am of Paul,*

<sup>e</sup> Jerom has omitted *επισκοπουνης* in 1 Pet. v. 2, but given it elsewhere.

<sup>f</sup> *Hæc propterea, ut ostenderemus apud veteres eosdem fuisse presbyteros quos et episcopos, paulatim vero ut dissensionum plantaria evellerentur, ad unum omnem sollicitudinem esse delatam. Sicut ergo presbyteri sciunt, se ex ecclesiæ consuetudine ei, qui sibi præpositus fuerit, esse subjectos; ita episcopi noverint, se magis consuetudine quam dispositionis dominicæ veritate, presbyteris esse majores, et in commune debere ecclesiam regere imitantes Moysen: qui cum haberet in potestate solus præsse populo Israel, septuaginta elegit cum quibus populum judicaret.* Tom. vi. p. 199.

<sup>g</sup> Tom. vi. p. 198.

and I of Apollos," &c. which obtained at Corinth many years before the death of Paul, it has been inferred that the authority of the presbyteries was devolved on bishops before the deaths of the apostles. But this quotation was a mere accommodation of Scripture language to the evils of after times; for he speaks not of the transfer of authority from many apostles to one, but of that of the presbyters of a church to one of their number. When Clement wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, which all acknowledge genuine, they had no bishop, and this was a little before the death of the last apostle. It has been also justly answered to the strange inference, that the date of the letter to the Corinthians, which has been thus assigned as the time of the introduction of episcopacy, was prior to the call at Miletus, to the letter to the Philippians, to the epistle to the Hebrews, and to the first epistle of Peter; and that Jerom would not have placed the introduction of episcopacy at the period of the schism at Corinth, and then proceeded to the argument for original presbyterial parity from four different facts, all of which must have occurred subsequently to the time which he had just before assigned as the termination of such equality among presbyters. Had Jerom said, that because of this schism at Corinth, it was decreed in all the world to devolve the power on one, the four instances which immediately follow, of the identity of the presbyterial and episcopal office, would have been palpable contradictions of himself. Equally futile is the position, that since there were neither synods nor councils to pass the decree which he mentions, Jerom must have supposed it was ordained by the apostles. His language fairly implies, that the decree was the general adoption of the expedient, of the responsibility of one presbyter, *by the churches* throughout the world; which agrees with his representation of this change as a *custom*, which came on gradually till it universally prevailed. Jerom's legitimate inference of original parity, from the identity of the commission, qualifications, and duties, and the promiscuous use of the

names of presbyter and bishop, in the apostolic times, excludes also the idea of an inferior order of presbyters in his day; for otherwise his terms should have been restricted. The sameness of order in the apostolic age, which Titus was to establish in all the cities of Crete, is clearly evinced to have then existed at Philippi, Ephesus, Pontus, and at the place of the destination of the letter to the Hebrews; and it may be presumed, until an exception can be shown, in all other Christian churches. The opposition of the terms bishop and deacon is obvious, but none exists between the words bishop and presbyter, which may well signify the same officer. And the omission of presbyters in Phil. i. 1, and of their qualifications in other letters, where those of bishops are given; the promiscuous use of the terms, as well as the historical fact of the accumulation of the power of the *πρεσβυτερος*, or *ruling* elder by general consent, all show that they were at first identically the same. The inference of Jerom, that since this preference of one was by the custom of the church, and not by the appointment of the Lord, that therefore the bishops ought to govern in common with the presbyters, was not only an appeal to their consciences, but the clear expression of the opinion of this learned man, that episcopal pre-eminence was destitute of apostolical and Scriptural foundation. From the words "imitating Moses, who, when he had it in his power to preside over the people alone, selected seventy with whom he might judge the people," an inconclusive argument has been elicited for a divine right in bishops, because Moses had such right. But that bishops, otherwise than as presbyters, are destitute of such right, is the very thing which Jerom has proved from their Scriptural identity, and confirmed by fact; founding modern episcopacy on custom and general consent. He can, consistently with himself, have meant no more by the example of Moses, than that, if the Jewish lawgiver, whose commission was immediately from God, so condescended in dividing his power, *a fortiori*, bishops

should remember the original administration, and that their pre-eminence was merely established by custom.

That Jerom was favorable to the three orders of clergy existing in his day, often appears in his works: so when he speaks of deacons as in the third degree, he alludes to their condition when he wrote; and so far was he from desiring a change, that he affirmed, "The safety of the church depended upon the dignity of the high-priest." But that its original condition, when left by the apostles, was otherwise, he knew and has shown. Against this, his catalogue of illustrious writers is cited, where James, the author of the epistle, is said to have been *ordained (ordinatus) bishop of Jerusalem by the apostles*. The genuineness of this passage has been often disputed, and standing among numerous interpolations, it is probably a corruption. But if received, it concludes nothing, because *bishop* may be taken in its appellative sense, *overseer*, and there may have been an understanding among the apostles that he should remain there, having, with the presbyters, the oversight of that important station. But if the apostle James was ordained a bishop by the other apostles, it was a mere nullity, if the offices be the same; if diverse, the apostles either exalted him to a higher office, for which they had no power; or they degraded him to an inferior, without a fault, and for no purpose which he might not effect as an apostle.<sup>h</sup> Also, if Jerom said this, he contradicted himself.

His letter to Evagrius, treating of the same subject, may be thus rendered: "We read in Isaiah, '*A fool will utter foolish things.*' I hear that a certain person

<sup>h</sup> That James the son of Zebedee, and James the son of Alphaeus, were the two apostles, and that James the less here intended, was not such, is an opinion without credible proof, and opposed at much length by Jerom. But that there were two only, and that James the less, the Lord's brother, was an apostle, and the same that is called the son of Alphaeus, and James the just, has been the general opinion, and received by the church in every age. Δυο δὲ γεγονασιν Ιακωβοι εις ὁ δικαιος—εἰλετος δε ὁ καρταλομηθεις.—Clem. Alexand. Vide Gal. i. 19.



has broken out into such a frenzy, as that he would honor deacons more than presbyters, that is, than bishops. For, since the apostle explicitly teaches that presbyters and bishops were the same, what calamity<sup>i</sup> has this servitor of tables and widows fallen under, that, swollen with self-importance, he may exalt himself above those, at whose prayers the body is dispensed and the blood of Christ. Do you ask proof? Hear the testimony: *‘Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.’* Do you wish also another sample? Paul thus speaks in the Acts of the Apostles, to the priests of a single church: *‘Be attentive to yourselves and to the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has placed (you) bishops, that you might govern the church of the Lord, which he has acquired by his blood.’* And lest any one may contentiously urge, that many bishops were in the same church, hear also another testimony, in which it is most clearly evinced that the bishop and the presbyter were the same: *‘For this object I left you in Crete, that you might redress what was defective, that you might appoint presbyters through the cities, as I also gave you in charge. If any one is without blame, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of or not subject to excess; for it becomes a bishop, as a steward of God, to be above censure.’* And to Timothy: *‘Neglect not the grace that is in you, which was given by prophecy, by the imposition of the hands of a presbytery.’* And Peter, also, in his first epistle, says: *‘The presbyters among you, I beseech, who am a co-presbyter, and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the future glory which is to be revealed, to govern the flock of Christ, and to oversee it, not from necessity, but willingly before God.’* Which is more plainly called in the Greek, ἐπισκοποῦντες, *superintending*; whence the name bishop is derived. Do the testimonies of such men appear to you small? Let the evangelical trumpet sound, the son of thunder, whom Jesus greatly loved,

<sup>i</sup> *Quid al. quis patiat, &c.*



who drank from the breast of the Saviour streams of doctrines: ‘*The presbyter to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.*’ And in another letter, ‘*The presbyter to the most kind Gaius, whom I love in the truth.*’<sup>k</sup> But that afterwards one was selected who might be set over the rest, was done in prevention of schisms, lest every one, drawing to himself, should rend the church. For also at Alexandria, from the evangelist Mark even to the bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters always named one, chosen from themselves, and placed in a higher grade, bishop. In the same manner as if an army should make a commander, or deacons choose from themselves one whom they may have known to be industrious, and call him the arch-deacon. For what does a bishop accomplish, ordination excepted, that a presbyter may not do? The church of the city of Rome, and that of the whole world, are not to be esteemed different. Gaul and Britain, and Africa and Persia, and the East and India, and all the barbarians, worship the same Christ, and observe the same rule of faith. If the reason be sought, the world is greater than a city. Wherever there shall be a bishop, whether at Rome, or Gubio, or Constantinople, or Reggio, or Alexandria, or Tanes, he is of the same importance and of the same priesthood.<sup>l</sup> Neither the influence of riches, nor the humility of poverty, renders him a greater or an inferior bishop. Moreover, they are all successors of the apostles. But you ask, How is it that at Rome

<sup>k</sup> Quod autem postea unus electus est, qui cæteris proponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est: ne unusquisque ad se trahens Christi ecclesiam rumperet. Nam et Alexandriae a Marco evangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in excelsiori gradu collocatum, episcopum nominabant: quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat aut diaconi eligant de se, quem industrium noverint et archidiaconum vocent. Quid enim facit, excepta ordinatione, episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat? Tom. i. p. 264.

<sup>l</sup> Potentia divitiarum, et paupertatis humilitas, vel sublimiorem vel inferiorem episcopum non facit. Cæterum omnes apostolorum successores sunt. Idem.

a presbyter is ordained upon the recommendation of a deacon? Why do you propose to me the custom of a single city? Why do you defend a rare occurrence, from which disrespect has arisen unto the laws of the church? The value of every thing is enhanced by scarcity. Pennyroyal is more precious in India than pepper. Their fewness has rendered the deacons honorable; their multitude has depreciated the importance of presbyters. Nevertheless, even in the church at Rome, presbyters sit, whilst deacons are standing; yet mischief increasing by degrees, I have seen, in the absence of a bishop, a deacon sit among the presbyters, and in domestic entertainments pronounce benedictions on the presbyters. Let them learn, who do this, that they act incorrectly, and let them hear the apostles: '*It is unfit that, leaving the word of God, we should serve tables.*' They should know for what purpose deacons were constituted. They may read the Acts of the Apostles, and remember their first condition. Presbyter is a name of age, bishop of dignity. Accordingly, Titus and Timothy received directions concerning the ordination of a bishop and of a deacon; concerning presbyters, total silence is observed, because the presbyter is comprehended in the bishop. He that is promoted is advanced from the less to the greater. Either, therefore, out of a presbyter let the deacon be ordained, that the presbyter may be shown to be inferior to the deacon, unto whose grade he is advanced from that which is small; or if out of a deacon a presbyter be ordained, he should know, that though he be inferior in salary, he is greater in priesthood. <sup>m</sup>And seeing we know that the apostolical traditions were taken from the Old Testament, what Aaron and his sons, and the Levites

<sup>m</sup> Et ut sciamas traditiones apostolicas sumptas de Veteri Testamento, quod Aaron et filii ejus, atque Levitæ in templo fuerunt, hoc sibi episcopi et presbyteri, et diaconi vindicent in ecclesia. Ibid.

were in the temple, this let bishops, and presbyters, and deacons claim to themselves in the church."

In no city was planted by the apostles more than one church; this the Scriptural and subsequent history of the church demonstrates. A presbytery existed in every organized church, and no more in a city: consequently, one presiding presbyter, who afterwards, by custom, for prevention of schisms, became the bishop, belonged to each church, and consequently to every city in the age of Jerom. At the period of the forgeries, which bear the name of the pious Ignatius, parochial episcopacy prevailed; but they betray ignorance, who affirm that presbyters were then laymen, or that such a grade is an essential characteristic of the Presbyterian church. Seven deacons were appointed at Jerusalem; no more were ordained at Rome. This paucity, and the nature of their duties, created popularity, whilst the number of presbyters diminished their importance. Dissentions arose between these orders, and Augustine has recorded an appeal to the bishop of that metropolis, to decide between them. Probably this letter was sought and given on that occasion; or it may have been in defence of the bishop of Rome, who was persecuted by a deacon of high rank. Though a presbyter, Jerom never officiated as such, except in private lectures on parts of the Scriptures, but even these were scarcely delivered by him as an officer, either at Rome or Bethlehem.

This letter could not have been the offspring of jealousy, but of regard to the truth. His language is temperate, his arguments rational, and his authorities the Scriptures; to these custom and expediency are subordinated—canons he does not even name. From the practice here mentioned of the church at Alexandria, after the death of Mark the evangelist, the existence of episcopacy from that period, which was apostolic, has been inferred. There could have been little difference between the state of things in apostolic

times, and at the death of Mark. In both, the presbyteries had their ruling elders or presidents; upon them custom, founded on consent, devolved the responsibility and superintendency of the presbytery, of which the church at Alexandria furnished a proof. Jerom shows this was a human innovation; because that presbyter and bishop were originally the same office, and so regarded by Paul, Peter, and John; also, by the churches of Philippi, Ephesus, those of Crete, and other places; each of which had been governed by the common council of its own presbytery. The election of such a presiding presbyter at Alexandria, he does not refer either to antecedent apostolic precept or example, but expressly to the presbyters themselves, whose election constituted the only disparity. Mark held the high office of evangelist, and, as such, might preside in any church, especially of his own planting. If he supplied the place of a president, in advanced age, after his death the presbytery of Alexandria, acting as others, must have chosen one permanently, the growth of whose power afterwards kept pace with the customs of other churches. The assertion of Eutychius, A. D. 950, that the presbyters in Alexandria from the first ordained such bishop, is incredible. Re-ordination began in the Cyprianic age, and in Jerom's day was performed only by bishops; so also was the ordination of presbyters. "What does a bishop, ordination excepted, that a presbyter may not do?" The first of these verbs denoted a present and continuous acting; the second is of the same sort, but potential, and consequently expressing a future. To imagine this spoken by Jerom of early times, is, therefore, obviously incorrect. When he wrote, every one knew that for presbyters to ordain was contrary to the laws and canons of the church; his proof of their original identity, from the fact that presbyters might now perform all other duties of bishops, required the exception. But every mind perceives that the establishment of the identity destroyed the originality and



authority of the exception. Any other interpretation would unnerve his argument, produce self-contradiction, and conflict with the fact that Timothy was ordained by a presbytery. The sameness of the office could, therefore, never be reconciled with episcopal ordination as in his day. The confession of such an exception, if it referred to apostolical times, immediately after showing that presbyters of themselves chose, and placed in his seat, and denominated the person the bishop of Alexandria, would betray weakness in the extreme. Although the presbyters of Alexandria officiated in their respective places in the city, they were rather a parish than a diocess, being one church, whereof they, with their bishop, who was one of themselves, constituted the presbytery—not a church session of mute elders—every presbyter had his place of preaching in Alexandria. Had the presbyters, so chosen to preside, been ordained by presiding presbyters of cities in Palestine or Syria, instead of being an example of the introduction of the custom of devolving the responsibility and oversight which had belonged to the presbytery on one of their number, it would have proved the reverse, and contradicted the position that presbyter and bishop denoted at first the same office.

It has been strangely alleged, that in the last sentence of the letter to Evagrius, it is plainly asserted not only “that the hierarchy of the church is founded on apostolic tradition, but also that the apostles had the model of the temple in their view, and raised their plan of church government according to the Jewish economy.” The object of this letter was to show that presbyters were superior to deacons; and one ground of the argument was, that presbyters were originally bishops, and that the difference between them in Jerom’s days had arisen by degrees, being founded merely on the custom of the church, and having for its object the prevention of divisions. He must, therefore, have designed no contrast in these words, be-



tween bishops and presbyters, but between them as one order and deacons as the other. In like manner, Aaron and his sons were the same priesthood, and superior to the Levites, who served under them. No argument can be fairly drawn from the terms "*apostolical tradition*," to make him inconsistent with his own position, that the change arose from the *custom of the church*. For writing of Lent, he calls it an "*apostolical tradition*," in a letter to Marcella.<sup>n</sup> And against the Luciferians, he calls it the *custom of the church*.<sup>o</sup> He has also shown, in so many words, that *apostolic* was synonymously used for that which was anciently adopted by the church.<sup>p</sup>

When Jerom speaks of *bishops as successors of the apostles*, he cannot mean, as some imagine, that they, in the modern sense, immediately succeeded them; because he has argued at much length and conclusively, that the office was the same with that of presbyters in the days of the apostles, and that the superiority they possessed in his day had arisen by the custom of the church, by little and little, to prevent schism. Also the word *successor* is not comparative; it measures not the extent of power, but merely points out those ordinary officers who followed the apostles in the government and instruction of the churches. The fanciful idea of *episcopal succession* by divine right was repugnant to the views of Jerom, who has unanswerably refuted it by numerous Scriptural testimonies, and demonstrated his meaning and consistency by asserting equally of presbyters, that they were successors to the degree of the apostles.<sup>q</sup> Iræneus had set him examples of each long before.

<sup>n</sup> Secundum traditionem apostolorum—jejunamus. Tom. ii. p. 414.

<sup>o</sup> Ex quo animadvertis nos ecclesiæ consuetudinem scqui. Tom. ii. p. 424.

<sup>p</sup> Unaquæque provincia præceptu *majorum*, leges apostolicas arbitretur. Tom. i. p. 194.

<sup>q</sup> Qui apostolico gradui succedentes. Jerom, ad Heliodor. Tom. i. p. 1.

As numbers increased, the presbyters served different assemblies in the same city or parish, but still belonged to one bench, over which there was in each church a *προεστως* or *presiding* presbyter. These presidents were afterwards enumerated as successors from the first planting of the churches. Thus not only were heretics excluded, but their innovations rejected, by demanding an uninterrupted succession of teachers of their tenets. But that these successors of the apostles inherited their gifts, authority, or influence, or had any other ordination than that of their co-presbyters, prior to the Cyprianic age, has never been shown to us by credible testimony. His defence of presbyters against deacons, his use of the word presbyter without the imaginary distinction of preaching and lay elders, and his universal silence with regard to the latter, evince that Jerom had no idea of lay presbyters. He is, therefore, another witness against that novel order, of which not a vestige has been found in the first four centuries.

## SECTION XIX.

*Augustine's birth, profession, immorality, Manichæism, and conversion.—Approved the canonical hierarchy.—Called the innovations titular distinctions.—Though a bishop confessed his inferiority to Jerom, who was a presbyter. Seniores were not presbyters, in his letters, but aged Christians.—Synesius; his writings show that the church was governed in Cyrene according to the canons of the council of Nice.—Sulpicius Severus testifies of a moral declension in the church; and the fact that a layman was made a bishop without censure.*

AURELIUS AUGUSTINUS was born at Tagaste, in Numidia, A. D. 354; taught rhetoric at Carthage, Rome, and Milan; and being of dissolute morals, adopted the error of the Manichees. Convinced by Ambrose, he became a Christian in his thirty-second year, and returned from Milan to his native city. Five years afterwards he was ordained presbyter by Valerius, at Hippo Regius; and in 395 was received into the episcopate. Of his contemporaries, Ambrose died in the fourth century; Chrysostom and Jerom in the fifth; the former he survived more than twenty, and the latter about ten years. These with Nonnus, Synesius, Sulpicius Severus, and Paulinus, were deemed orthodox writers; Socrates the historian, and Pelagius, were of the opposite character. He died in Hippo, in 430, whilst it was besieged by the Vandals. His works are contained usually in ten tomes and a supplement. His confessions constitute an edifying history of his early life, and of his views at different periods. His retractations should be consulted with the parts of his works which they correct. His knowledge of the Greek, deemed by himself defective, was obviously competent; but he excelled in the Latin lan-

guage, and could not have been ignorant of the Punic. His comparative proficiency in theology was unusual for so late a convert. Possessing a masculine understanding, his decisions were often too prompt, but readily abandoned for the sake of the truth. His opinions were in high repute, and of great utility at the Reformation, when also some of his errors were adopted. In ecclesiastical government, he professed conformity to the canons and customs of the church. Thus when he nominated Eradius the presbyter, to become his successor, and obtained the vote of the people, he observed, that he had been ordained bishop in the life-time of Valerius, contrary to a canon of the council of Nice, but of which neither of them had had knowledge; the reprehension he had received on that occasion, he wished Eradius to escape; but the vote he caused to be recorded and subscribed by the people, and introduced the young man into a portion of his labors.<sup>a</sup>

That the office of bishop was founded upon the custom of the church, he acknowledges in a letter to Jerom: "I intreat you to correct me faithfully when you see I need it; for although, according to *the titular distinctions which the custom of the church hath introduced*, the office of bishop may be greater than an eldership, nevertheless, in many respects, Augustine is inferior to Jerom."<sup>b</sup> To suppose he meant hereby the abandonment of a known Scriptural superiority, and the depreciation of a divine right into a mere titular pre-eminence, is an impeachment of the piety of Augustine. The language, *jam ecclesiæ usus obtinuit*, is a plain acknowledgment, that episcopal superiority was not original, but merely founded on the custom of the

<sup>a</sup> Tom. ii. p. 515. Epist. 110.

<sup>b</sup> —"Rogo ut me fidentur corrigas, ubi mihi hoc opus esse perspexeris. Quanquam enim secundum honorum vocabula, *quæ jam ecclesia usus obtinuit*, episcopatus presbyterus major sit, tamen in multis rebus Augustinus Hieronymo minor est." Tom. ii. Epist. ad Hieron.

church, and no prevention of the precedence due to Jerom for his distinguished learning and knowledge. Had Augustine's compliment been made at the expense of truth, it would have been also an imputation of ignorance and vanity to Jerom. That canonical distinctions originated in custom, and were ratified by mere human authority, was then known; and when truth demanded from the bishop an acknowledgment of his personal inferiority to the presbyter, it was fit, also, that he should wave the distinction which custom had introduced in opposition to the word of God.

He has, on the question, Whether those charged with false doctrines be in the church or not, discarded the authority of the most venerable of the fathers, and the obligation of the decrees of councils, and affirmed that the question can be decided by the sacred Scriptures alone.<sup>c</sup> But on the order of the church he sided with Jerom, and, like him, acquiesced in its government, apprehending no possible advantage from opposing the customs of the church, the canons of councils, and the laws of the empire. The ecclesiastical administration was not then a matter of controversy. "The bishops, who are this day throughout the world, whence sprung they? The church herself calls them fathers; she has borne them, and she has placed them in the seats of the fathers."<sup>d</sup> He acted as a Christian should do; the church of Christ was then, and still is such, though the original form of government may not exist in the world. The investigation of truth is rarely unimportant; but on these points necessary only, when error would unchurch those whom God accepts; or where primitive truth is denied, and its advocates arraigned by the ignorant.

<sup>c</sup> *De unitate ecclesiæ.* Chap. xix. p. 5.

<sup>d</sup> "Hodie, episcopi qui sunt per totum mundum, unde nati sunt? Ipsa ecclesia patres illos appellat, ipsa illos genuit, et ipsa illos constituit in sedibus patrum." Tom. viii. p. 417.



An argument has been attempted for lay presbyters from an epistle which Augustine wrote to his church at Hippo,<sup>e</sup> commencing with these words: "Dilectissimis fratribus, clero, senioribus et universæ plebi ecclesiæ Hipponensis."—*To the brethren greatly beloved, the clergy,<sup>f</sup> the elders, "and all the people of the church at Hippo."* The next epistle is directed to the same church, and begins with "Dilectissimis fratribus, conclericis, et universæ plebi."—*To the brethren most beloved, fellow clergymen, and all the people, &c.* These two letters were written to the same church, consequently the same officers and people were addressed in both. The two first terms, "*dilectissimis fratribus,*" occurring in each salutation, may have been intended of all the worshippers, or of the clergy only. *Clero* the *clergy*, in the one epistle, corresponds to *conclericis*, fellow clergymen, in the other, *senioribus*, the *elders*, expressed in the first, are included in the *universæ plebi* of the second. The *conclericis* of the second being precisely equivalent to the *clero* of the first, of which the *senioribus* being expressed, constituted no part, there elders could not have been implied in the *conclericis*. If they were not of the clergy, they were not officers; because had they been such, they must have been treated with disrespect, either by a total omission, or the including of them in the *plebi*. If they were not officers, the term *senioribus* was taken appellatively, in that letter in which it occurs, and meant nothing more than *the aged men* of the congregation, who have been often thus distinguished, because of their experience and gravity; but are nevertheless really a part of the *plebs*, or common people. This interpretation is also corroborated by the circumstance, that *senioribus*, not *presbyteris*, is used; the latter being the ordinary official term, and the other generally appellative; a discrimination which, though

<sup>e</sup> Tom. ii. p. 661. Epist. 139.

<sup>f</sup> *Clerus* has been improperly translated a "*clergyman.*"

neglected by Tertullian and Cyprian, is carefully followed by Optatus and Augustine, who observes, "Omnis senex etiam presbyter, non omnis presbyter etiam senex."<sup>g</sup> — *Every old man is an elder, not every elder also an old man.* These seniores, who sometimes occur in the Christian writers of Africa, are in no instance to be deemed of the clergy, they administered no ordinances, never sat as presbyters, and neither excommunicated nor restored; but were placed after the deacons, and consulted merely for their knowledge and prudence, or introduced because of their interest.<sup>h</sup> The captions of these letters of Augustine are conclusive proof, that the seniores of whom he speaks were not clerical, and so not even on an equality with deacons, and consequently, upon no construction, the *πρεσβυτεροι*, ruling presbyters of the New Testament, or any officers in the gospel churches. That these were never such in the churches of Africa, may be fairly also inferred from the omission of them, both in the enumeration of the officers of a particular church,<sup>i</sup> and in the catalogues given in the councils of Carthage, where they are thus enumerated: *bishop, presbyter, deacon, subdeacon, acolyth, exorcist, reader, door-keeper, and chorister.*<sup>k</sup> If such a class of officers as *seniores* had existed next after the deacons, they must

<sup>g</sup> Tom. iv. p. 99.

<sup>h</sup> Vitringa (de Synag. 115) has written fully on this subject, and denies that the *seniores plebis* were either *πρεσβυτεροι της εκκλησιας*, or *πρεσβυτεροι πρεσβυτεροι*; and says, they were merely *γεροντες*, and no part of the ecclesiastical body to whom the care and the ministry of the church were delivered. Casanbon distinguishes between *seniores urbium* and *seniores ecclesiarum*; these last, he says, were *quadamtenus ecclesiastici*, yet *laici* and *guardiani templorum*. Bingham (lib. ii. c. 19) considers the *seniores* of Augustine, Optatus, and the papers appended to the latter, to have been men, who, for their years and faithfulness, were intrusted to take care of the goods of the church, but neither *lay elders* nor *πρεσβυτεροι*. But modern opinions are inadmissible evidence.

<sup>i</sup> *Contra Cresconium*. Lib. iii. c. 29.

<sup>k</sup> Concil. Carthag. iv. "Episcopus, presbyter, diaconus, subdiaconus, acolythus, exorcista, lector, ostarius, psalmista."

have been enumerated in such catalogues, but nothing of the kind has occurred. Augustine describes the orders of his day in Africa, which no one better knew, in the same manner.<sup>1</sup> “A higher order contains in and with itself that which is less, for the *presbyter* performs also the duty of the *deacon*, and of the *exorcist*, and of the *reader*. Also, that a *presbyter* is to be understood to be a bishop, the apostle Paul proves, when he instructs Timothy, whom he had ordained a *presbyter*, what kind of a bishop he ought to create; for what is a bishop but a *primus presbyter*, that is, a high-priest, and he calls them no otherwise than his co-presbyters and co-priests, and may not the bishop also call his deacons his fellow servants?” But he had immediately before professed not to know by what law, *by what custom, or what example*, “the deacons were made equal with presbyters,” “*presbyteris ministros ipsorum pares*,” “as if deacons were ordained from presbyters, and not presbyters from deacons.”

The expression, *Peregrinus presbyter et seniores ecclesiæ musticanæ regionis*, cœ.<sup>m</sup> have been alleged in proof, that the church in the city Mustica had not only a preaching presbyter, but lay elders also; and, consequently, that here is at least one example of the existence of elders, such as are formed in some of the Presbyterian churches. But this semblance of an example of lay elders in an ancient church, is too slight to sustain an examination. The distinction made between *Peregrinus* and the *seniores ecclesiæ* was, that he was a presbyter and they were not presbyters: if not

<sup>1</sup> “Major enim ordo intra se et apud se habet et minorem, *presbyter*, enim diaconi agit officium et exorcistæ et lectoris. *Presbyterum* autem intelligi episcopum, probat Paulus apostolus, quando *Timotheum*, quem ordinavit *presbyterum*, instruit qualem debeat creare episcopum. Quid est enim episcopus, nisi *primus presbyter*, hoc est summus sacerdos. Denique non aliter quam *compresbyteros* hic vocat, et *consacerdotos* suos, numquid et *ministros* *con*diaconos suos dicit episcopus.” Tom. iv. 780.

<sup>m</sup> Tom. vii. p. 270.

presbyters, consequently not the *ruling elders* of the New Testament, for these were presbyters, *πρεσβυτέραις πρεσβυτέροις*. Being neither presbyters nor deacons, and no intermediate grade ever having existed in the church, these *seniores* consequently had no office. Also, if they were not presbyters, the word *seniores* must necessarily be understood in its appellative sense, *old men*; and the whole expression, *seniores ecclesiæ*, can mean no more than *the aged men of the church*. This passage describes the prosecution of a petition before the tribunal of the prætor at Carthage by the presbyter Peregrinus, and the senior members of the church at Mustica, against Felicianus, who detained possession against the sentence of an ecclesiastical assembly, which pronounced him a heretic. That the aged members, in whom the possession at least, and it may be the legal title of the church had been vested, should join with a presbyter in such petition, was naturally to be expected; and no more is here expressed.

The state of the church in North Africa, excluding Egypt and Cyprenaica, was, in the days of Augustine, very different from that of other countries. As every city had its bishop, so every parish was a diocese, and every pastor a bishop. The episcopate of Carthage had the superintendence of Africa, and the bishop of Hippo Regius, instead of Cirta, (Constantina) for the most part next to the Metropolitan of Carthage, had precedence over those in Numidia; but in the Mauritanias, and generally in Africa, this depended upon seniority in office, and not upon the civil dignity of the city, as in other parts of the empire.

The greatest respect was paid to old men, both among Jews and Gentiles. Polybius observes, that among the Lacedæmonians under the regal authority, *all things which respected the commonwealth were transacted by and with the concurrence of the old men.*<sup>n</sup> The

<sup>n</sup> Γεροντες—δια ὧν και μετὰ ὧν παντὶα χειριζοιται τα κατὰ τὴν πολιτειαν. Polyb. Hist. lib. vi. p. 681.



Christian churches also adopted a wise conformity to such usages. To be consulted was the claim of the aged, when their interests were concerned, in religious as well as in civil matters of importance. Thus in the "*Gesta Cæciliani et Felicis*," usually bound up with *Optatus*, mention is made of *episcopi, presbyteri, diaconi, and seniores*—seniores meaning not officers, but aged men of the common people. Nevertheless these *seniores*, though divided from presbyters by the intervention of deacons, have been brought as examples and proofs of lay elders, and identified with those who are in the New Testament denominated ruling presbyters; but who really were and have been shown by many testimonies to have been those presbyters who presided, one in every church, and who, after the days of the apostles, received by custom gradually the power, name, and dignity of bishops. The mistake is, however, exposed by what follows: "*Adhibete conclericos et seniores plebis, ecclesiasticos viros.*"—*Call the clergy of every sort, and the seniores of the common people, who are members of the church.* Here *conclericos* includes the presbyters, deacons, and sub-deacons, whilst the *seniores* are *plebes*, or common people.<sup>o</sup>

Synesius was chosen and ordained bishop of Ptolemais in Pentapolis, when a layman. He wrote in elegant style, but rather as a philosopher than a divine. His discourse delivered A. D. 398 before the emperor Arcadius, and several epistles written in the first of

<sup>o</sup> That *clero et senioribus* should have been translated "*to the clergyman and elders*," more than once in support of the American Presbyterian government, is by mistake. *Clero et senioribus* mean the same with *clericis et senioribus*. *Clerus* is never *clergyman*, this is *clericus*, but *clergy*; and the term comprehended at that period, what it still does among Episcopalians, presbyters, deacons, &c.; consequently, *senioribus* meant a portion of *plebis, common people*; and was still further restricted by the terms *ecclesiasticos viros, church members, not ecclesiastics*; "*ecclesiastical men*" in our language is a phrase equivalent to clerical, and an obviously unfair translation of *ecclesiasticos viros*, which intended no more than men of, or connected with, the church.



the following century, still remain in Greek, his own language, Cyrene, his native city, having been colonized from Greece. He distributes the officers of the church into the *Levite*, the *presbyter*, and the *bishop*, λευιτης, πρεσβυτερος και επισκοπος.<sup>p</sup> The latter of whom he denominates *the priest of a city*, his office *a priesthood*, ιεροσυνην,<sup>q</sup> and speaks of *the election of a bishop*, αιρεσεως επισκοπου,<sup>r</sup> and of the imposition of the hand,<sup>s</sup> whereby the party is *manifested a presbyter*, χειρι πρεσβυτερος απεδεδεικτο.<sup>t</sup> His representations accord with the established order of the ecclesiastic administration of his day, and shows that among the Greek Christians in Africa, the church was governed at that period according to the canons of the council of Nice.

Severus, of the Sulpician family, a presbyter of Agen on the Garonne in France, wrote an outline of history, sacred, Jewish, and Christian, from the creation unto the end of the fourth century; the life of Martinus; three epistles, and three dialogues; and is supposed to have died about A. D. 420. His style discovers advantages in his education. His judgment of characters and historical facts might have escaped censure, had his credulity in monkish legends known any bounds. Speaking of the military guard, directed by the emperor Hadrian to be constantly kept at Jerusalem, he observes, that until that period, "*the church had no priest at Jerusalem, except of the circumcision,*" and that "*then first Mark, of Gentile extraction, was made their bishop.*"<sup>u</sup> Priests, Levites, altars, sacrifices, and other words proper to Jewish and Pagan worship

<sup>p</sup> Synesii Opera, p. 23. Epist. 58.

<sup>q</sup> ο ιερευς της πολεις. Ibid. p. 198.

<sup>r</sup> Page 222.

<sup>s</sup> Της σκυχειρος. Page 223.

<sup>t</sup> Page 222.

<sup>u</sup> "Hierosolymæ non nisi ex circumcisione habebat ecclesia sacerdotem"—"tum primum Marcus ex gentibus apud Hierosolymam episcopus fuit." Sulpicii Severi Sac. Hist. lib. ii. S. 45, p. 364, 365.

were not introduced till after the days of the apostles, into the Christian church; and *sacerdos*, here promiscuously used with *episcopus*, at its first introduction, designated only the presbyter, which the occasional insertion *summus*, by this writer, to distinguish the bishop, still viewed as the *primus presbyter*, plainly evinces.

When comparing the state of the Christian church in the time of the ten years persecution, under Diocletian and Maximinus, he observes, *that martyrdoms were then much more eagerly sought by glorious deaths, than episcopal sees are now coveted by depraved ambition*; <sup>v</sup> a clear evidence of the moral declension of the church in a single age after the establishment by Constantine of that episcopal government, which had been introduced by custom, founded in the expediency described by Jerom.

In the history of his own times, he mentions the fact, that *Priscilianus made a layman, bishop of Abila*. —“Priscilianus etiam laicum episcopum in Labinensi (abilensi apud Hieron.) oppido constituit.”<sup>w</sup> Nor was this objected against him by the orthodox. In the writings of Sulpicius there is mention of bishops, presbyters, arch-deacons, deacons, sub-deacons, readers, exorcists, but not a solitary instance of any such office as that of a presbyter, who was a layman.

Synesius resided on the east side of North Africa; Sulpicius in the west of Europe; the former under the government of the Greeks, the latter that of the Romans; the first was a gentleman of estate, the other a nobleman; the one a philosopher, the other an historian; and, when converted, the former a bishop, the latter a presbyter; both were acquainted with the government of the Christian church, and both have

<sup>v</sup> “Multoque avidius tum martyria gloriosis mortibus quarebantur, quam nunc episcopatus pravis ambitionibus appetuntur.” Ibid. p. 368.

<sup>w</sup> Idem. lib. ii. S. 63, p. 422.

recorded their views; yet neither a word, nor a hint, has appeared in the works of either concerning lay presbyters, or any such officer in the Christian church.

## SECTION XX.

*John Cassian ; his progress and writings.—Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, ecclesiastical historians, whose writings describe the government of the Christian church from the council of Nice, or commencement of the reign of Constantine the Great.—The establishment of Christianity, and the power given to ecclesiastical officers for its safety, every one then approved.—The introduction of the Gospel into India in the days of Constantius and Athanasius, is testified by them all, and by Ammianus, and was in the fourth century, and must have been diocesan episcopacy.*

JOHN CASSIAN, after leaving a monastery at Bethlehem, and visiting others in Egypt, was ordained a deacon by Chrysostom at Constantinople.<sup>a</sup> Thence he went to Rome, and finally to Marseilles, where he was made a presbyter, and resided till his death, A. D. 440. The Greek was probably his native language, but he appears in Latin.<sup>b</sup> He wrote Instructions for Monks, in twelve books; Conferences with Egyptian Ecclesiastics; and of the Incarnation, in seven. These writings incidentally, but correctly, describe the government of the church, at that period, as episcopal; yet express an opinion, that the first state of the church was monastic, and all things common, and that the latitude given by the council at Jerusalem was because of Gentile infirmity. But when, even from this, the church had degenerated, some, possessing the fervor of the apostles, left the cities, and retired into private situations, who are thence called Monks, Anchorites, Eremites, and Ascetics.

<sup>a</sup> De Incarnatione, lib. vii. c. 31.

<sup>b</sup> Collatio i. c. v. p. 219.

An *abbas* was the head of a monastery, and if it was remote from a city, or very large, he was usually a presbyter, that he might administer the sacraments. But sometimes vain glory suggested clerical preferment, and a desire of the office of presbyter, or deacon. Each of these was then a clerical grade;<sup>c</sup> the office of presbyter was consequently undivided, and that of a deacon being also clerical, the possibility of an inferior presbyter is excluded.

*Seniores*, in the writings of Cassian, mean either *abbates*, or the monks, who are intrusted with the care of the noviciates,<sup>d</sup> except when taken for the Christian fathers, never ecclesiastical officers, for he deemed it an important maxim, that a "monk should by all means shun the bishops;" which he said he could not always rehearse without confusion, for he had not been able to escape their hands.<sup>e</sup>

Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, wrote ecclesiastical histories of the same times, beginning in the reign of Constantine the Great, and terminating about the times of Theodosius the Younger. Their concurrent testimony evinces the continued influence of the canons of the council of Nice, established by the authority of the Roman emperor; which, with various modifications, are still the fundamental laws of the Catholic ecclesiastical government; and have been, and probably always will be, unceremoniously enforced, wherever her physical means have extended or shall be supplied. These historians are competent, but not always credible witnesses, even of the things which occurred in their own times; for great allowances must be made for the ignorance, credulity, and depravation of the people, and the arts and ambition of a

<sup>c</sup> "Nonnunquam vero clericatus gradum, et desiderium presbyteri vel diaconatus innuitit." Scil. Cenodoxia, lib. xi. c. 14, p. 178.

<sup>d</sup> Lib. xii. c. 14, p. 193. Col. i. c. 22, p. 325.

<sup>e</sup> Lib. xi. c. 18, p. 181, de institutis.



clergy, who maintained their establishment by the vigilant exercise of their new authority, and the substitution of monkish legends and fraudulent devices, in the place of the simplicity of the gospel, and its saving truths.

Socrates was born at Constantinople,<sup>f</sup> in the reign of Theodosius the First. After a liberal education, he studied and professed the law, and wrote his history in seven books.

Canonical ordination, introduced, as we have seen, without either Scriptural precept or apostolical example, could neither enlarge nor limit the office of presbyter; its essence was the same, the ordainers being still presbyters. Also, the ambition of preachers rendered convenient, custom established, and civil authority confirmed, a diocesan form of government; but neither were the essentials of the church of Christ thereby destroyed, nor have presbyters gained; whether considered as bishops or priests, for lay presbyters as yet had no existence, a particle more or less of legitimate Scriptural power than had been at first given to them. As members of the social compact, they may receive and bear its authority; and as officers of civil society, they ought to be respected; but when they claim, hold, and exercise municipal offices, by a divine right, because the office of presbyter is of such nature, their pretensions are absurd, and where their discernment justifies the charge of disingenuity, wicked.

At that period, no prudent Christian would have refused to abide by those canons of councils, which, being the supreme law of the empire, secured the people from Pagan persecution under which they had groaned so long. Also, the high respect entertained for the canon law, at the first, appears by many examples. When the church at Constantinople were told that Proclus, whom they had elected, could not

<sup>f</sup> Socrat. lib. v. c. 24.

become their head, because a canon had forbidden the translation of a bishop,<sup>g</sup> they submitted without complaint. But on the next vacancy, it having been discovered that no such canon existed, they, after twenty years, re-elected the man of their choice, who became their bishop.<sup>h</sup> Also, the fact, that the bishop of Rome was deemed to have passed the bounds of priestly order in punishing the Novatians,<sup>i</sup> clearly shows, that the public knew that the civil was to be merely auxiliary unto, not superseded by, ecclesiastical authority, in the application of force. It was deemed also a departure from rules, though highly expedient, that Silvanus, bishop of Troas, should appoint a layman to try those causes, which the clergy had been, before that period, authorized to decide.<sup>k</sup> This could not then have been a novelty, had lay presbyters previously existed in the church. Nor have we, in all the seven books of Socrates, discovered so much as a word, or hint of the existence of such an office, whilst bishops, presbyters, and deacons, frequently occur, and always in the character of clergy.

Hermias Sozomenes, a native of Palestine,<sup>l</sup> cotemporary with Socrates, wrote nine books, and dedicated his history to Theodosius the Younger.

This writer presents neither a vestige of the long sought office of a subordinate presbyter, nor of any diversity among presbyters, except the surrender of the exercise of a portion of their authority to one of their number, then exclusively denominated bishop. The excellency of his style challenges our regard to his sense of terms. For bishop, he uses, promiscuously, *επισκοπος*, *πρεσβυτης*,<sup>m</sup> *προεσβως*,<sup>n</sup> *ηγουμενος*,<sup>o</sup> and *πρεσβυσια*, and *επισκοπη*, as convertible terms.<sup>p</sup> It would have

<sup>g</sup> Lib. vii. c. 36.

Ibidem c. 40,

<sup>i</sup> Lib. vii. c. 11.

<sup>k</sup> Lib. vii. c. 37.

<sup>l</sup> Sozom. Hist. lib. v. c. 15.

<sup>m</sup> *χειροτονησει της αντισχεων εκκλησιας πρεσβυτην*. Lib. ii. c. 19.

<sup>n</sup> *Τοις προεσβωσι των εκκλησιων*. Lib. vi. c. 4.

<sup>o</sup> Lib. vi. c. 32.

<sup>p</sup> Lib. viii. c. i.

been unaccountable, had Paul intended, by the very same word, a subordinate lay presbyter,<sup>q</sup> which other writers have adopted to distinguish the bishop. But the Apostle, and every Greek reader of his letter, understood by it, the presbyter who presided in the church or presbytery. And this *ruling elder* was the man in every church, who, according to Jerom, received, by a general custom, and became accountable for, the exercise of the higher powers of the presbytery. That each church, with few exceptions, still had, under the Nicene establishment, its presbyters, is abundantly evinced. Thus, instead of the confessions of lapsed professors made to the presiding presbyter, in the presence of the *witnessing multitude of the church, as in a theatre,*<sup>r</sup> the duty was assigned to one of the presbyters in every church. At Alexandria this change did not obtain, for it had been there the custom, and still was when Sozomen wrote, for each presbyter to have his own charge, over all of whom one was the bishop;<sup>s</sup> and as each presbyter preached in his own place, so the bishop also alone in his, the arch-deacon reading the Scriptures.<sup>t</sup>

Other diversities also existed; in some provinces there was a single bishop, in others, *bishops were consecrated in the villages, εν χωμαις επισκοποι ιερονουηται.*<sup>u</sup> Also, the custom in Rome of having only seven deacons, was not followed in all places.<sup>v</sup>

Theodoritus, a native of Antioch, was, at seven years of age, received, for the sake of education, into a monastery, and afterwards instructed by Theodore of Mopsuesta, and Chrysostom. From the episcopate of Cyrus, a remote city of Syria, which he had reluc-

q 1 Tim. v. 17.

<sup>r</sup> ως εν θεατρῷ υπο μαρτυριῶν τῶν πληθειῆς ἐκκλησίας. Sozom. lib. vii. c. 16.

<sup>s</sup> Εἶναι γὰρ ἐν ἀλεξάνδρεια εἶθος καθάπερ καὶ νῦν ἐν ὄντι τοῦ κατὰ πάντων ἐπισκοποῦ, πρεσβυτέρους ἰδίᾳ τὰς ἐκκλησίας καλεῖται καὶ τὸν ἐν αὐταῖς λαὸν συναγεῖν. Lib. i. c. 16.

<sup>t</sup> Socrat. lib. v. c. 22. Πρεσβύτερος ἐν ἀλεξάνδρεια οὐ προσομιλεῖ.

<sup>u</sup> Sozom. lib. vii. 19.

<sup>v</sup> Ibidem.

tantly accepted, he was translated to Antioch, afterwards deposed by a council, and finally by another restored to his former see, where he died A. D. 457. His principal works are his commentaries upon the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Psalms, Canticles, &c. all the prophets but Isaiah, and all the epistles of Paul; an ecclesiastical history in five books. He wrote also dialogues, sermons on Providence, letters, and on several other subjects. His piety is unquestionable, his talents above mediocrity, his style charming, and yet, however strange, his credulity was disgusting and contemptible.

No where is more clearly seen than in his history, either the influence upon civil government which ecclesiastical polity can maintain, when legally established; or its tendency, from the venality of ambitious ecclesiastics, to become an engine of oppression, or an instrument of power in the hands of princes. Julian sought sanctuary in it as a reader,<sup>w</sup> whilst in his heart an idolater,<sup>x</sup> and an enemy, for he interdicted the teaching of poetry, rhetoric, and philosophy to the "Galileans."<sup>y</sup> Nor could he have had any aim, in recalling to Antioch, Alexandria, Italy, and Sardinia, <sup>z</sup> their banished bishops, but to procure favor with the Christians, whose numbers he feared. Accordingly as an emperor was pagan, Arian, or orthodox, he contrived to countenance idolatry, or to introduce bishops of his own creed, but generally with caution. All parties courted power, and by it Pagans and Christians, without other argument, asserted their claims. Yet was it a posing question, which a presbyter of Edessa offered to the Prefect, who was directed by Valens to support a bishop of his own appointment: "Whether the emperor received the dignity of priesthood with the imperial commission."<sup>aa</sup> For this he

<sup>w</sup> Theod. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 2.

<sup>x</sup> —Exta rimabatur adsidue, avesque suspiciens.—Ammian. Marcell. lib. xxii. c. 1.

<sup>y</sup> Theod. lib. iii. c. 7.

<sup>z</sup> Lib. iii. c. 4.

<sup>aa</sup> Lib. iv. c. 16.

suffered ostracism by the edict of Valens, who, like Julian, hated the Christians, and, like him, fell by the just vengeance of heaven. This discrimination was confessed also by Valentinianus, when he said to orthodox bishops soliciting a convention of the clergy, whom, nevertheless, he favored, that it was not lawful for him, a layman, officiously to interfere.<sup>bb</sup> In like manner, Theodosius, to whom Gratian had transferred the East after the death of his uncle, when Ambrose directed the emperor, by a deacon, to stand without among the laity, "*for that the purple constituted emperors, not priests,*" took the station assigned him, and expressed his gratitude for the reproof.<sup>cc</sup> The efforts of Theodosius were exerted to reduce the remaining idolatry which Julian had revived, and Valens, after the death of Jovian, had partially, at least re-revived. From that time the hierarchy established by Constantine<sup>dd</sup> remained immovable amidst the convulsions of the eastern and western empires, and the paralyzing influence of Arian and other heresies; and may be said, under all the revolutions of modern times, still to exist.

In his commentaries we find no lay presbyters, and no discrimination between those who *rule*, and those who *labor in teaching*.<sup>ee</sup> He even makes them the same persons.<sup>ff</sup> In one place, he supposes *they that were over them*,<sup>gg</sup> were those who offered up prayers; in which he agrees with Justin, who says, the *president*, *προεστως*, offered up the eucharistic prayers. He acknowledges that presbyters are intended, in the writings of the New Testament, where bishops are named;<sup>hh</sup>

<sup>bb</sup> Ἐμοὶ μὲν μετὰ λαοῦ τεταγμένοι οὐ θεμις τοιαῦτα πολυπραγμαίνειν.  
Sozomen. lib. vi. c. 7.

<sup>cc</sup> Theod. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 18.

<sup>dd</sup> Idem. lib. v. c. 20.

<sup>ee</sup> Theod. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 7.

<sup>ff</sup> Idem. Heb. xiii. 17.

<sup>gg</sup> Idem. Thess. v. 12.

<sup>hh</sup> Idem. Phil. i. 1., 1 Tim. iii. and Titus i. v. 7.



but he supposes a higher order existed ; and accounts Epaphroditus to have been the apostle of the Philippians. But Paul denominates him only their messenger to bring him supplies. Titus he places over Crete, and Timothy over the churches of Asia ; and thinks the same rules which were given to presbyters, were applicable to those of such superior rank, who afterwards took the name bishop exclusively, and left the title apostle to those who were “*truly*” such. But this unsupported conjecture of a primitive ordinary office, superior to presbyters in every church, of which no one has ever shown a syllable of proof, badly accords with what he has said on Titus, first chapter, of the “*custom*” that there should be one bishop, and a plurality of presbyters in each city.

The introduction of episcopacy in India, shown in each of these histories, is substantially the same. Meropius, a Tyrian philosopher, following the recent example of Metrodorus, went with his two nephews, Edesius and Frumentius, into India in pursuit of knowledge. Having explored the country, they thought to return in a vessel. Landing in a port of India for refreshments, they were seized, the philosopher slain, and the youths made captives. They served the king till his demise, and remained with the queen during the minority of his son. Frumentius sought out Roman traders there, with whom, and some natives, he worshiped. Emancipated, they returned together unto the Roman borders, when Edesius went home to Tyre, Frumentius to Alexandria, unto Athanasius. He showed him the prospect in India, was ordained bishop, and, returning by sea, successfully planted the gospel in India.<sup>ii</sup> In the first apology of Athanasius to Constantius, he complains that the emperor had written to Atzanius and Sazamas, the governors of Auxumis, to send Frumentius, whom Athanasius had or-

<sup>ii</sup> Socrates, lib. i. c. 19. Sozomen, lib. ii. c. 24. Theod. Hist. Eccles. lib. i. c. 23.

dained, to George, bishop of Alexandria, to be tried, or instructed; and requires that the people and clergy should become Arians, and if any disobey, they must be put to death. If this be the same Frumentius, Abyssinia was the India in this history, for Auxumis is a city eastward from the head of the Nile, and towards the sea. But there are reasons against that supposition. Admitting that a colony of the Indi settled in Africa, and were still called by that name; yet the country to the south-east of Persia at the period of those writers was, and still is, India.<sup>kk</sup> Also, the youths appear to have gone from Tyre unto, and returned from, India by land. Neither of the historians mention Auxumis, or appear to have thought of Abyssinia. They allege, there was a king in India not subject to the Romans, but the letter of Constantius is addressed to *two* governors, and requires them to act in a style suitable to their being his subjects, conferring upon them the dignity of Roman citizens. Socrates speaks of the India to which Bartholomew came, and evidently had on his mind the account given by Eusebius,<sup>ll</sup> who says, that Pantænus had visited the place to which Bartholomew went, and had found a Hebrew copy of Matthew's gospel there; nevertheless, Socrates asserts that the Christian religion *did not enlighten them before the time of Constantine*. Also, Sozomen testifies, *that the priesthood had this its beginning in India*.<sup>mmm</sup> The two first of these historians discriminate between a nearer and an ulterior India, and evidently confine these occurrences to the nearer; also, according to Socrates, Meropius visited the same region of the Indies, which Metrodorus had then lately traversed. But Metrodorus was, on his return, robbed, or feigned himself to have been robbed, by Sapor, king of the Persians, which act Constantine

<sup>kk</sup> Athanasii Opera. p. 20.

<sup>ll</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 20.

<sup>mmm</sup> ἡμεν δὲ παρὰ Ἰνδοῖς ἰερωσύνην λατῆν ἔσχεν ἀρχῆν. Sozom. lib. ii. c. 24.

resented and made it a matter of accusation, which continued such in the reigns of Constantine and Julian.<sup>nn</sup> The return of Metrodorus from India must therefore, have been through Persia; and the route of the young men being the same, the India, here mentioned, certainly lay in the East, and was not Abyssinia. These and other reasons seem conclusive, that the accounts are of two Frumentius's, and if so, then the period of the commencement of episcopacy in India, is fixed to have been in the fourth century; when episcopacy, as established by the canons of the council of Nice, was prevalent every where.

<sup>nn</sup> —“ Expeditionem parans in Persas—ad ultionem præteritorum vehementer elatus est.”—Scil. Julianus Ammian Marcell. lib. xxxii. c. 12. Non Julianum, sed Constantium ardores Parthicos succendisse cum Metrodori mendaciis avidius acquiiscit.—Idem. lib. xxv. c. 4.

## SECTION XXI.

*Leo succeeded Sixtus; his claim of Roman superiority because they possessed the ashes of Peter; and might expect his favor still. Leo attempted as civil authority failed to view the ecclesiastical power founded upon divine right, and having argued Peter's higher commission, supposed his apostolical authority still to remain, and to be devolved on the bishop of Rome. But the first councils established the dignity and authority of the sees by those of the cities in which they were. To secure the canons of the council of Nice against the repeal attempted in later councils, he supposed them inspired. His claim of appellative jurisdiction rejected by the bishops of Africa. Actuated by pride and intolerance, his high talents and popularity gave him great advantages in establishing the papal throne, which it was his chief aim to accomplish by every means, wrong and right. Although he failed in the East and Africa, yet he succeeded in bringing the heathen invaders of the Empire in Europe all under the spiritual power of the bishop of Rome.*

LEO, denominated the Great, after having exercised the office of archdeacon of Rome during the term of twenty years, was elected successor to Sixtus the third, A. D. 440. His works are in the finest style of Latin; of the Greek his knowledge was defective.<sup>a</sup> Possessing unusual qualifications in point of knowledge, influence, experience and eloquence, he evinced by his uniform conduct a disposition to extend the papal jurisdiction, equally by courtly address or daring enterprise, truth or falsehood, right or wrong, to the utmost extreme.

Having claimed and held an unscriptural superiority to the presbyters of Rome,<sup>b</sup> and thereby the closest in-

<sup>a</sup> —injungo—ut universa facias—in Latinum translata, ut in nulla partè actionum (*scil.* *concilii Chalcedonensis*) dubitare possimus. Leon: ep. 90.

<sup>b</sup> Etius, ab officio archidiaconatus per speciem provectionis (*scil.*

timacy with the pontificate, through a term of twelve years prior to the elevation of Sixtus, his talents being also occasionally had in requisition by the Emperor, in promotion of the public weal, he must have concurred in the craft and violence displayed by that bishop in retaining the diocess of Illyricum, contrary to a canon of the council of Ephesus of 441.<sup>c</sup>

Because Rome was declining, the empire divided into two, and the enemies of both increasing in numbers, power, and military skill, it was attempted by Leo to render the claim of ecclesiastical precedence more permanent, by founding it on sacred authority. The superior dignity of the Roman see was therefore alleged to have arisen from a higher commission given to the Apostle Peter, whose bones, left in that metropolis, perpetuated the right of supreme authority, whatsoever might be the diversity of the merits of the bishops in the seat itself. Peter being ever an apostle, and still having by an ubiquity of presence the pastoral care of the whole church, has a more special regard for his favorite church where his body sleeps, and intercedes for them by his prayers in heaven.<sup>d</sup> And therefore the representative of Peter has precedence of all bishops in the church<sup>e</sup> universal. Such dialectical skill had not been attained by the bishops of the first general council of Nice, for they confirmed by their canons the jurisdiction of the bishops of Alexan-

*ad presbyteratum*) amovetur. Leon. op. 133. Qui primus fuerit ministrorum et à Pontificis latere non recedit, injuriam putat si presbyter ordinetur. Hieron. ez. 48.

<sup>c</sup> Council Ephes. can. vii.

<sup>d</sup> —cui ter dixit “pasce oves meas:” quod nunc procul dubio facit, & mandatum Domini pius pastor exequitur, confirmans nos cohortationibus suis, et pro nobis orare non cessans. Leon. op. p. 4. Si autem hanc pietatis suæ curam omni populo Dei, sicut credendum est, ubique prætendit, quanto magis nobis alumnis suis opem suam dignatur impendere, apud quos, in sacro beatæ dormitionis thoro requiescit. Ibidem. Etsi enim diversa nonnunquam sint merita præsulum, tamen jura permanent sedium. Idem. p. 137.

<sup>e</sup> —cunctis ecclesiæ rectoribus Petri forma præponitur. Leon. opp. 3.



dria, Rome, Antioch, and Jerusalem, over the same regions respectively, which they had gained by ancient custom.<sup>f</sup> Nevertheless higher objects than the heresy of Arius convened the first oecumenical council; and their decrees, established by Constantine as the supreme law of the empire, effected, as he had designed, a Christian establishment instead of the Pagan, and conformed to its features; in which the diocesses of the empire had their patriarchs, the capitals of the provinces their metropolitans, and the cities their suffragan bishops; the grade of civil authority in each of the cities becoming the standard of the jurisdiction of their bishops; which hierarchy has been, as far as the revolutions of the nations would allow, continued into this day. The second general council did therefore decree, "that the bishop of Constantinople should have the birthright of honor, next to the bishop of Rome, because she is New Rome." Also the council of Chalcedon, in number the fourth, which consisted of more than six hundred bishops, and in which Leo appeared by his legates, have shown this same ancient opinion of the origin of the dignity of the church of Rome, alleging that the precedence given to that church had been because the city was imperial,<sup>g</sup> and that they, for the same reason, gave equal privileges to the holy see of New Rome, that is of Constantinople.<sup>h</sup> The councils of Nice, Constantinople, and Chalcedon, had consequently no idea of the divine right which the bishops of Rome have claimed, to sustain an authority likely to decay with the declension of the dignity of their city. The jurisdiction given to the See of Constantinople by the council of Chalcedon, over Pontus, Asia, and Thrace, and the bishops of those diocesses, who were among the Barbarians, was violently resisted by Leo, but ineffectually, because

<sup>f</sup> Conc. Nic. can. vi. and vii. *Ἰαρχαία ἐθνικοῦ συνήθες ἐστί—.*

<sup>g</sup> Conc. Chalced. can. xviii. *διὰ τὸ βασιλευεῖν τὴν πόλιν.*

<sup>h</sup> Conc. Chalced. can. xviii. *τῷ αὐτῷ σχοπῷ κινουμένοι—ἴσα πρεσβεία. ἀπενεμαν.*

founded on the known rule, that upon a division of a province the bishop of the new metropolis took rank, and power, as a metropolitan. Thus, in the diocess of Thrace, the suffragan of Byzantium had become the archbishop of Constantinople, to the exclusion of the exarch of Heraclea, when Constantine made it the seat of his empire. At length also the metropolitans of the respective diocesses of Pontus and Asia fell under the bishop of New Rome.

These things Leo pronounced *wicked attempts*, "ausus improbos," but to the decrees of the council of Nice he ascribed the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>i</sup> Accordingly the canons of the six hundred and thirty bishops convened at Chalcedon by the authority, and ratified by the decree of the Emperor, are to this hour held, by the western church, to have been wholly void of authority, except as to matters of faith,<sup>k</sup> because rejected by this haughty prelate, who chose to consider the canons of the council of Nice incapable of repeal.<sup>l</sup> Yet Leo found no scruples in entertaining, and encouraging appeals to himself under the canons of the council of Sardica, although expressly contrary to the fifth canon of the same council of Nice, which had given the jurisdiction in such cases to the provincial Synods. Whatever enhanced the power of the Roman see, was therefore valid and every thing of a contrary nature void. Both the cunning and disingenuousness of this bishop were opposed, when having ambitiously besought the Emperor, that his "vicars should preside," in the council of Chalcedon, "because he learned, not without sorrow, that some of the brethren were not able to retain Catholic firmness, against the violence of misrepresentation,"<sup>m</sup> he imprudently

<sup>i</sup> —quas per 218 antistites Spiritus Sanctus instituit.—Leon. ep. 79.

<sup>k</sup> Zonaras. p. 92. Binnius Partis xi. c. vi.

<sup>l</sup> Si quid usquam aliter quam illi statuerunt, præsumitur, sine cunctatione cassatur. Leon. ep. 80.

<sup>m</sup> Quia vero, quidam de fratribus (quod sine dolore non didici-

demanding of the council, in his letter to them, presuming upon the Emperor's conceding it, that they should consider him to preside, by those who were sent immediately from *the apostolic seat*, and to be present in his vicars;<sup>n</sup> thus claiming from the bishops the right of presiding over the council, as the prerogative of his see, at the time he was asking the very same thing, as a favor from the Emperor, and thereby acknowledging the right to be in him. Nevertheless the Emperor, remembering no doubt the outrages of the council at Ephesus, saw it to be proper, to direct his own representatives to hold the first places, and the legates the second, except during the trial of Dioscorus, from which the imperial commissioners had been instructed to retire.

In Christianity, knowledge being practical, and truth holy, they are not possessed so long as the heart is adverse; but, in common estimation, orthodoxy is attainable by the disingenuous, and the name of high theological proficiency becomes the reward of the ambitious. Leo's letter to Flavianus exhibited the views of the incarnation generally entertained by the bishops of the fourth council, and was both an evidence of ingenuity, and an instrument of popularity. Nevertheless, some of them, alleging that it approached too near to the error of Nestorius, refused it; until his legates consented to anathematize that heretic. It was not, therefore, adopted by the council, from any idea either of the infallibility, or authority of Leo; and its general reception in both empires, chiefly resulted from the acquiescence of the council of Chalcedon in its correctness. To secure its adoption by the council, he gave it great publicity. He sent it to the bishops

mus) contra turbines falsitatis non valere catholicam tenere constantiam, prædictum—vice meâ Synodo convenit præsidere. Leon. ep. 69.

<sup>n</sup> Qui ab apostolica sede directi sunt, me Synodo vestra fraternitas existimet præsidere, qui nunc in vicariis meis adsum. Leon. ep. 87.

of Gaul, that their approbation might accompany it in the East, but their answer came too late. The acknowledgment, that it contained the expression of their faith, which they had received from their fathers, ° had neither been sought, nor made, if the bishops of Rome had been then deemed exempt from error. Yet he replied, when “the holy Synod had amputated from the church” the errors against which he had asked their influence, “that it had been by his humble writings, supported by the authority and merit of his Lord, the most blessed apostle Peter.”<sup>p</sup> By such flourishes, for which that saint would have blushed, could they have reached Paradise, did Leo claim the authority of Peter, knowing that his office terminated with his life, and that he was neither the head of Christ’s church, nor present with it, and that he had derived from Peter not a particle of authority, more than Paul and other apostles had given to each of the six hundred and thirty bishops who composed the council.

In his excellent, but craftily designed letter to the bishops of Mauritania Cæsariensis, after reciting that many had been chosen from the laity to the episcopal office, he is pleased to say: “We permit them to hold the received priesthood, without prejudice to the apostolic seat, and the decrees of our predecessors and ourselves, which contain the salutary enactment, that no one of the laity, though supported by numerous votes, shall ascend to the first, second, or third degree of the church, before he has arrived at that favor through the legal steps.”<sup>q</sup> Such laws, being merely human, and founded only in convenience, may be

° —Recognoverunt fidei suae sensum, et ita se semper ex traditione paternâ tenuisse. Leo Opera. p. 127.

<sup>p</sup> Sancta nunc Synodus (humilitatis nostrae scriptis, auctoritate Domini mei beatissimi Petri apostoliet merito roboratis) amputavit, &c. Idem. p. 329.

<sup>q</sup> Leon. epist. 1.—Ex laicis ad officium episcopale delecti sunt. Sacerdotium tenere permitimus, non præjudicantes apostolicæ sedis statutis, &c.



suspended by those who made them: but had they been divine, he must have arrogated a power of dispensation never given to a mere man. His excessive indulgence proved, nevertheless, inadequate to secure to him the jurisdiction which he aimed to exercise over the churches in Africa; they rejected his authority, held him bound by the canons, and would, by no means, suffer appeals to be carried to the bishop of Rome.

After a long peace, the approach of Attila, the terror of both empires, drove the irresolute Valentinian the Third, from Ravenna to Rome, where it was resolved to send an embassy to meet the monarch of the Huns. Leo and two others were selected to negotiate, each eminent for rank, talents, experience, and address. The clerical appearance, deportment, and eloquence of the bishop are said to have produced a sensible impression upon the barbarians; with which also his own peculiar circumstances co-operated to give success. His subjects were not universally idolaters, for many Christians had been carried away by the Goths from the Roman provinces in the latter part of the fourth century, from whom they had gained some knowledge of the gospel. From these, Ulphilas had descended, who had translated portions of the Scriptures into their language, and been held by them in the highest estimation.

With Genseric, the king of the Vandals, though a Christian, Leo was less successful. Invited by the injured Eudoxia, from the coasts of Africa, he crossed to the Tiber, and sacked Rome fourteen days, without opposition. The bishop acted a noble part, going forth with his clergy to meet him, he saved much effusion of blood, but only obtained milder terms for the suffering citizens. Wealth, not territory, was the object of the invader, who possessed accurate information of the weakness of the Romans, and the confusions of the councils of the men who were in power. Though a barbarian, yet professing to be a Christian, he could



have designed no injury to the church.<sup>r</sup> These embarrassments of the empire were, in each instance, by the vigilance and address of Leo, rendered ancillary to his purposes of enlarging the authority, and extending the power of his own ecclesiastical monarchy; which, it is probable, both Attila and Genseric perceived to be as capable of enhancing, ultimately, their own influence, as that of the Roman empire.

Leo evinced characteristic adroitness in filling vacant sees with men prompt to subserve his designs, in extending his own influence by intimidating some, and gaining the favor of others; and in removing out of his way, men who were conscientiously inflexible. Even the patriarch of Constantinople, his greatest rival, was under his direction, so long as Flavianus lived, whom he ruled by friendship; but over his successor, Anatolius, he could not maintain the ascendancy; he, nevertheless, gained some verbal concessions from him, not an abandonment of jurisdiction, by his influence on Marcian and his empress. He gave ready audience to complaints against patriarchs, metropolitans, and inferior bishops, thereby extending his jurisdiction, under the pretext of administering justice. His favorable standing with the emperors, both of Rome and Constantinople, which he so industriously cultivated, and his unremitting communications with the eastern bishops by letters and messengers, were advantageous to the cause of orthodoxy against the heresy of Eutyches and Dioscorus; but all were insufficient to secure to the Roman see any authority in Thrace, Asia, Palestine, and Egypt, whatever may have been alleged by modern writers to the contrary notwithstanding. The supineness of the wretched Valentinian the Third, allowed, during his feeble reign,

<sup>r</sup> Genseric was an Arian, and persecuted the orthodox bishops in Africa with relentless fury. He took away the golden table and candlesticks which had been brought to Rome from the temple of Jerusalem; and also the spoils of paganism belonging to the capitol.

ample scope to the ambition of this bishop. Arles was the eye of Gaul, and her bishop, because the exarch of the seven provinces of Narbonne, was a Mordecai to Leo. Hilary, the envied rival, had deposed Celidonius from the episcopal grade. The discarded bishop received countenance, and was allowed to officiate at Rome. Hilary also came to the capital of the empire, and, after visiting the tombs, called on Leo, and complained, that bishops deposed in Gaul were allowed to exercise their ministry at Rome; but whilst he alleged it to be scandal, he said he did not come to accuse. After affirming the propriety of his own conduct, and disregard of the menaces of Leo, he returned to Arles; but sent a priest and two bishops to Leo, with suitable instructions. The answer which he received from the prefect of Rome, insinuates that Leo was governed by pride, and actuated by intolerance. Leo well knew that he could not canonically receive the complaint of Celidonius, but he was determined to subjugate the see of Arles. The success of the African churches, in combatting his claim of appellate jurisdiction, had probably excited him to efforts more violent in extending his jurisdiction in Europe. But the unrelenting cruelty which he practised against the ingenuous and excellent Hilary, because he opposed the unjust extension of the power of the Roman see, is not atoned by the canonization of the name of Hilary. And it excites disgust to see Leo pronouncing the memory of him blessed,<sup>s</sup> when out of his way, whom, whilst living, he had reviled, in his letter to the bishops of Vienne, as the vilest of men.

At the commencement of this century, the Roman empire was severed into two. Before its termination, the Western fell wholly into the hands of the barbarians. The Ostrogoths possessed Italy, the Huns Pannonia, the Franks Gaul, the Visigoths Spain, the Vandals Africa, and the Saxons England. The policy

<sup>s</sup> Defuncto Sacræ memoriæ Hilario. Epist. 50.

of Leo aimed to secure to the bishop of Rome the ecclesiastical pre-eminence which had been incident to the imperial purple as Pontifex Maximus, but nominally abandoned by Constantine, and the Christian emperors. His efforts in the Eastern empire, and in Africa, were fruitless. In the West, his successors, following his steps, ultimately prevailed. The barbarian chiefs, well knowing the power and influence of the Christian clergy, even among their own tribes, willingly transferred to them the same profound respect which had been yielded to their idolatrous priests. Thus each of the kingdoms which arose in, and superseded the European portion of the Western empire, not only adopted and established the Christian religion, but with surprising passivity subjugated themselves to the usurped authority of the hierarchy of Rome.

Our purpose being to ascertain the primitive government of the Christian church, as it was left by the apostles and evangelists; and, in order to the right interpretation of the sacred word, first to know from facts the additions which have been made since their days, that we may exclude them from any part in such interpretation, it is unnecessary to continue an uninterrupted investigation of its history, lower than unto the period when the Western church was fully established in Europe.

## SECTION XXII.

*Separatists from the Western church prior to the Protestant Reformation.—The Piedmontese were in the Latin church in 817.—Their archbishop, Claude, lived and died in connexion with the Catholics.—Had bishops, after their separation, who were denominated Seniors or Ancients.—Perrin was a follower of Waldo, and incredible as to historical facts before his day.—The Waldenses of Bohemia and Moravia preferred the doctrines and worship of the Eastern church, but were obliged to yield to the persecutions of the Latin.—Their seniors or elders were superintendents or bishops in the modern sense.—The Waldenses of France were the followers of Peter Waldo and others, who adopted the ancient discipline of the evangelical churches in the valleys of Piedmont.*

HAD this people, prior to the Reformation, an order of ecclesiastical officers, who were mute presbyters, or lay elders? This is the subject of the following investigation.

That a secluded Christian people had inhabited either the valleys of the Alps, or the forests of Germany, from the days of the apostles, without connexion either with the Roman or Greek church, has been often asserted, but never shown. The people of Piedmont, and those of Bohemia, have, with justice, claimed an existence, respectively, prior to the time of Waldo. His followers flying from persecution in the south of France, have often found sanctuary with both; and all of them have been persecuted under papal bulls made against the Waldenses. But whilst a similarity of doctrines obtained among them, they lived under different civil and ecclesiastical governments; their creeds, articles, confessions, and discipline, though in substance allied, were not identically the same. To escape the confusion which exists in

the histories of the Waldenses, this name must be used only for the followers of Waldo, amalgamated as they are with the orthodox of Albi, and the consideration of them postponed to the successive accounts of the Piedmontese and Bohemians.

#### THE PIEDMONTESE.

Piedmont, named from the valleys of the Alps, *a pede montium*, was subject to the Lombards, from the year 568, until 774, when Charlemagne destroyed the monarchy. It constituted a part of the German empire from that period until its dismemberment in 888. From thence till 919, all Italy was in confusion. In 936, Otho conquered Italy, and the valleys of the Alps remained under German princes till 1137, when they became the property of the house of Savoy; who were counts till 1416, dukes till 1713, and afterwards, by the acquisition of Sicily, kings till 1796.

In these valleys the gospel was planted at an early period; and being a frontier of Italy, their religious government was that of the peninsula. But remote from the vortex of corruption, they tardily received innovations. They were still a constituent part of the Latin church in the year 817, and subject to the religious government of that age, which was episcopal. Claude, in 815, had been promoted to be arch-bishop of Turin, the principal city of Piedmont, by Lewis the Meek, the son of Charlemagne and emperor of the West. But whilst Claude submitted to the ecclesiastic supremacy, he denied the orthodoxy of the Pope. In the council of Frankfort, 794, he had been active against image-worship, and had seconded the emperor's wishes to bring over pope Adrian the First from the errors of the second Nicene council of 786. When, in 823, this excellent man was accused of innovation, because he ordered the images to be cast out of his churches, he declared, "that he taught no new



sect, but kept himself to the pure faith." The truth was supported during his life, in Piedmont, against the corruptions of the Latin and Greek churches. He lived and died the arch-bishop of Turin, in full connexion with the Catholic church. Nor did the Piedmontese depart from the communion of that church, "so long as she did not attempt to force them to embrace her errors." The Piedmontese churches were episcopal before and during the life of Claude. His followers were persecuted by his successors in office, but not immediately; for Claude lived nearly to the dismemberment of the German empire, after which, the political confusions of Italy presented some defence against persecution, till the conquest by Otho. As this period was long before Dominic and his inquisition, it is not probable that the principles and doctrines of Claude produced a separation before the middle of the tenth century. Sir Samuel Morland, who was sent by Cromwell to the duke of Savoy, in 1658, to mitigate his persecution of the Piedmontese reformers, has observed, that Claude left the lamp of his doctrine to his disciples, and they to their successive generations in the ninth and tenth centuries. The precise era of their separation from the Catholic church, we have not found; but no persecution appears to have been sustained by them under the German princes to whom they were subject, till 1137. If, indeed, that oldest document, which is furnished by Perrin, and by Morland, purporting to be a confession of their faith in fourteen articles, and which they place at 1120, were so old, that would prove a separation, before they came under the house of Savoy. But though in 1146, they were persecuted, and some of them fled into Bohemia, there is neither proof nor probability shown, that those articles were four centuries before the Reformation. The twelfth was made against the doctrine of transubstantiation, which we should not expect before the council of Lateran, in 1215, or at the earliest, in 1160. The ninth, expressly against the error of pur-

gatory, which would seem to have been unnecessary, before the council of Florence, in 1438. When these articles were made, they, no doubt, had still their bishops and priests, as there is not a word in them concerning church government. The followers of Claude must have retained episcopal ordination. The monk Rainerus names Belazinanza of Verona, and John De Luggio, as eminent bishops of the Waldenses about 1250; and is quoted by Perrin, as having written of the Piedmontese, in his account of heretics, that "they had a greater bishop, and two followers, whom he called the elder son, and the younger, and a deacon; that he laid his hands upon others, with sovereign authority, and sent them where he would, like a pope." This Perrin denominates an "imposture." But the monk relates things of his own day, and his means of knowing the truth were better than those of Perrin.

The latter was averse to episcopacy, wished to represent the Piedmontese and the reformers in France, as the same sect; and has actually concealed the episcopate of Stephen, the last bishop of the Austrian Waldenses. What Perrin has gleaned in opposition to Rainerus, rather supports him. He says, from Morel and Masson, of Provence, who were divided from the Piedmontese only by the mountains, and were more nearly allied to them than those of Dauphine: "The money that is given us by the people is carried to the aforesaid general council, and is delivered in the presence of all; it is then received by the *ancients*, and part thereof is given to those that are travellers, or way-faring men, according to their necessities, and part thereof unto the poor." These *ancients* were clerical men, and the *seniors*, or bishops, who ordained their preachers, like Stephen, the last of the Austrian Waldensian bishops, from whom the *Unitas fratrum* now hold their succession. The name bishop was generally substituted by some other word, as senior, superintendent, or perhaps guide, and leader; but was understood by Rainerus. The *way-faring*

*men*, who received an annual support from the people, through the hands of these bishops, were the travelling preachers whom they sent "where they thought good," to different and distant places in the countries of Europe, who were persecuted every where under the name of Vallenses, and afterwards as Waldenses. What the form of the ecclesiastical government of the Piedmontese came to be, is uncertain. Their preachers were called barbes and pastors. Their *guides* or *leaders*, if they were not the same with the ancients or bishops, were laymen of prudence, to direct the people, who lived under a Catholic and persecuting civil government, whose fury they were often obliged to shun by fleeing to the mountains.

The assertion, that "the office of ruling elders as retained in their churches, is recognized in a number of places in Perrin," we cannot find supported, and believe to be founded in mistake. One place has been pointed out in his works, (ch. 4, p. 49,) to show that there was a synod, in which ministers and elders convened, "long before the time of Luther." But it proves to have been after the deaths of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Zuinglius, Peter Martyr, and Cranmer. We do not wonder that such mistakes should have been made, in reading the confused story of John Paul Perrin. He never lived either under the civil or ecclesiastical government of Piedmont; he was a follower of Peter Waldo; lived at Lyons, and dated his works in 1618. He is a loose writer, without any talent for discrimination, and his credibility has lately been, and perhaps deservedly, impeached by the Rev. William Jones.

Morland mentions a manuscript dated in 1587, seventeen years after the synod last spoken of, which speaks of annual councils, and of one, at which there were one hundred and forty barbes; but no elders are said to have been present. We have found no synods among them before the Reformation. On the 12th September, 1532, after the Augsburg confession had

been made, and the protest signed, and after the people of the valleys knew that the Waldenses of Dauphine and Provence had sent their pastors, George Morel and Peter Masson, into Germany, to confer with Œcolampadius and Bucer, they held a general meeting at Angrogne, to hear the letters of those reformers, and then entered into articles accordant with the doctrines of the Reformation. But even there we find no mention of ruling elders or lay presbyters. The intermediate unscriptural order did come in at the Reformation, but we have found no trace of it before it. The resort to the history of the Piedmontese to prove lay presbyters, appears, therefore, to be entirely unavailing.

#### THE WALDENSES OF BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA.

In the ninth century, the ambition of the rival pontiffs of Rome and Constantinople, occasioned efforts to be made by both the Western and Eastern churches, to plant the gospel under their respective standards on the banks of the Danube. The sister of the king of the Bulgarians became, whilst a captive at Constantinople, a Christian. He sent thither for missionaries, and obtained Cyril and Methodius, Pastors, also, afterwards went from Rome into Bulgaria. The attempt of the Roman see in the tenth century to render the Bohemians subject to their ecclesiastical government, produced resistance and persecution; but their ritual was at length received upon the express condition, that it should be in the Slavonian language. In this century, evangelical impressions were made on the Hungarians, Dalmatians, Polanders, Danes, and others. The duke of Bohemia, Bolislaus, was a Christian of the Latin church; his daughter, the wife of the duke of Poland, persuaded her husband, about 965, to become a Christian. But idolatry prevailed near the southern shores of the Baltic. In Pomerania, Chris-



tianity was not tolerated till the arms of Otho had prevailed in 1126. The people of Bohemia were averse to the Romish rites, preferring those of the Eastern church, but in the twelfth century their zeal began to succumb to persecution. In 1146, some of the Vallenses, fleeing from Roman persecution in Piedmont, sought refuge among them. That Peter Waldo died in Bohemia in 1179, is not supported. The Bohemian Christians, whilst with the Greek church, can, with neither reason nor propriety, be supposed to have had lay presbyters, for none such are found in that church; and so far as the influence of the Latin church prevailed with them, it could have had no tendency to produce an office, equally foreign to its principles, and unknown in its government. During the reigns of the native kings of Bohemia, which terminated in 1305, and until the reign of the emperor Charles the Fourth, which began in 1346, the corruptions of the Western churches had been generally adopted in Bohemia. The great number of orthodox professors, said to have been in Bohemia in the fourteenth century, must be misrepresentation. The Catholic errors were afterwards resisted by the pious confessors, Conrad Stickner, John Militsh, and Matthew Janowsky, all of whom died near the end of the fourteenth century, and by John Huss. The latter adopted the doctrines of Wickliff, was burned in 1415, and is accounted the founder of the society of *Unitas fratrum*; but the name and compact of union obtained not, till after the middle of the fifteenth century. These have been called also Waldenses, from their union with those of Austria. These being episcopal, there was still neither place for, nor the existence of, lay presbyters.<sup>a</sup> In 1432, the council of Basil satisfied

<sup>a</sup> Postea iidem, scilicet Fratres Bohemi, seu Unitas fratrum cum reliquis quibusdam Waldensium, in confinibus Moraviæ et Austriæ agentibus, conjungendi, unitate inter eos ac confœderatione initâ. Unde commune Bohemis Fratibus Waldensium nomen," &c.



the Calixtins, who contended only for the cup, and terminated the war which followed the death of Huss; but his other followers, the Taborites, were not reconciled. In 1438, popery gained the ascendancy, by the establishment of the Austrian line over Bohemia and Hungary; and the termination of the Greek empire by the Turks, in 1453, prevented further efforts to return to the Greek church. Being cut off from ordination both from the Roman and Greek churches; in 1467, the Brethren obtained episcopal ordination, for certain men chosen to be *seniors*, superintendents, or bishops, from Stephen, who was the last bishop of the Austrian Waldenses, (Vallenses,) and was burned at Vienna in 1468.

This excellent, evangelical, and persecuted people, had more respect for sound doctrines, than scrupulous correctness in the matter of church government. Their prejudices have always been for the episcopal government, even whilst groaning under the oppressions of diocesan episcopacy. From the commencement of their new episcopate, which was about fifty years before the Reformation, they had eight kinds of officers; *elders*, *almoners*, *inspectors* of buildings, *ministers*, *acolyths*, (candidates for the ministry, who read homilies,) *deacons*, who preach, *presbyters*, or priests, who administer ordinances, and *bishops*, whom they denominate *seniors*.<sup>b</sup> The confession of faith, which this

“Patet veneratas eas ecclesias suos episcopos, vel super-attendentes, primos cum ordinis tum potestatis prærogativâ; scalam ministerii suis gradibus distinxisse,” &c. Frederici Spanhemii Hist. Christ. Secul. xv. Lemma vii.

<sup>b</sup> Perrin, p. 64, says: “At the time when the doctrine of John Huss was received and entertained there, the ministers, *elders*, and Protestants of Bohemia say,” &c. And in p. 66, speaking of the martyrdom of the Austrian Waldensian bishop Stephen, he calls him “*an elderly man*.” In p. 19, he says, Aldegonde relates, that “There was a certain man called Bartholomew, born at Carcassone (in France) who founded and governed the churches in Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Hungary, and ordained ministers,” &c. Perrin must have known, that these *elders* and *clergymen*

people first presented to Ladislaus in 1508, and presented amplified, to Ferdinand in 1535, and which received a preface from the pen of Luther, does mention "*elders*," but expressly as ordainers of ministers, who were, therefore, the *seniors* before mentioned. Their elders, who were inferior to the almoners and inspectors, were laymen, not presbyters. If their deacons were preachers, their presbyters, who were of a superior order, could not have been laymen; if also, both were inferior to their *seniors*, being ordained by them, these were their bishops. It is very strange that a proof of the imaginary order of lay presbyters should be attempted to be brought from a church, which held, and still holds, not only the presbyters, but the deacons of the apostolic times to have been, by the nature of their offices, preachers of the word.

#### THE WALDENSES IN FRANCE.

The south of France was the country of the Waldenses, properly so called. A few of the persecuted followers of Claude, the Vaudois, Vallenses, or Piedmontese, had fled over to Provence, and enjoyed peace. Among these, Joseph preached with success; and in Languedoc, in the twelfth century. The Josephists were prior to Waldo. Peter Bruis taught in the same strain, in the latter place, in 1130, and was burnt at St. Giles. Henry was the successor of Bruis. Their followers were called Peter Brussians, and Henricians. In the same region, Arnold, and Esperon, a priest, in the same century, opposed the errors of the Romanists. All who held the doctrines of these reformers, and who lived near Albi, were called Albi-

were. bishops, but writing a century after the Reformation, he wishes to cast a veil over the government of those churches. What confidence can be placed in such a writer?

genses; a name, by which all of this faith, who lived westward of the Rhone in France, were called, as others on the east of that river were distinguished by the name of Waldenses.<sup>c</sup> These were so called from Peter Waldo, a layman of talents, learning, and piety; who abandoning merchandise at Lyons, began to preach the gospel in 1160. His success produced the anathema of pope Alexander the Third, against him and his followers. These fled over the Rhone into Provence, into Piedmont and into Germany, and Waldo, after three years concealment, fled into Picardy, and afterwards to other places. They who took refuge in Piedmont, were denied, by the house of Savoy, that toleration, which the natives of the valleys enjoyed, holding similar doctrines. The Waldenses, in the south of France, multiplied in concealment. From 1305 to 1362, Avignon was the seat of rival popes, by which circumstance they were greatly exposed. In 1380 and 1393, they were furiously persecuted. In 1478, Lewis XI. directed letters to the governor of Dauphine for their relief, but in 1484, those who inhabited the valley of Loyse, were almost literally exterminated by the arch-bishop of Ambrun. The oldest confession of faith of this people, may be found in Bray's Perrin,<sup>d</sup> and in Sir Samuel Morland<sup>e</sup> in different English translations, in twelve articles. It was furnished by Du Molin, and had been made at some period before the Reformation, but how long after the death of Waldo, is not known. The fifth article alone touches the subject of government; is opposed to the Catholic hierarchy, but neither elders nor presbyters of any kind. A paper, which Sir Samuel<sup>f</sup> denominates "The ancient discipline of the evangelical churches in the valleys of Piedmont," Perrin,<sup>g</sup> who was a Wal-

<sup>c</sup> The Paulicians were called also Albigenses, because condemned by a council held at Albi in 1176.

<sup>d</sup> P. 2. b. l. c. xiii. p. 24.

<sup>f</sup> Page 72.

<sup>e</sup> Page 37—39.

<sup>g</sup> Book v. c. vii.

densian, gives as "The discipline under which the Waldenses and Albigenses lived." It is allowed by both to have been several hundred years before the Reformation. In it purgatory, transubstantiation, extreme unction, and confirmation, are all rejected.

The opinions of these historians of facts passed before their day, are little to be trusted—their documents alone are valuable. In this discipline are contained, in the second and fourth articles, these words: "Amongst other privileges which God hath given to his servants, he hath given them this, to choose their leaders, and those who are to govern the people, and *to constitute elders in their charges*, according to the diversity of the work, in the unity of Christ, which is clear by that saying of the apostle in the epistle to Titus, chap. 1. *For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.*" In article 5, "Rulers and elders are chosen out of the people, according to the diversity of the work in the unity of Christ," &c. Perrin omits the catechism, which constitutes the fourth article. In Bray's translation, these things are thus rendered: "Amongst other powers and abilities which God has given to his servants, he hath given authority to choose leaders to rule the people, and *to ordain elders in their charges*, according," &c. "We choose among the people rulers and elders according to the diversity of their employment, in the unity of Christ." Perrin also gives from "book of the pastors, George Morel and Peter Masson," the same who were sent from Provence into Germany to consult the reformers in 1530, the like account: "Amongst other powers which God hath given to his servants, it belongs to them to choose guides of his people, and *elders in their charges*, according," &c.,—ut supra. By *elders in their charges*, must have been intended pastors, who were elders in the Scriptural sense. They certainly had pastors, because



Morel, Masson, and Perrin were such, and the flocks could have been the charges of no others. The quotation from the epistle to Titus, which is a direction to ordain elders, brought as an authority for the office, also evinces the correctness of this construction. The terms, constitute and ordain, used with *elders*, and not with *rulers* and *leaders*, discover an additional proof, that the elders were the preachers or pastors of the churches; and that such leaders and rulers, being neither said to be constituted, nor ordained, were consequently not elders of any kind, except in the appellative sense. The single question on these passages must be, whom, or what must we understand by the "leaders, and those who are to govern the people;" which is Morland's translation of "*Regidors del poble*," the words of the discipline. Perrin's copy, or translation, has been rendered by Bray, "leaders to rule the people;" and the expression of Morel and Masson are translated "guides to the people." These were, therefore, under every view, evidently laymen, chosen to advise and support the people, under the dreadful persecutions to which they were so often subjected. The same kind of prudent men were selected also among the Piedmontese, for the same purpose. If Perrin and Morland be each correct in their title prefixed to this discipline, then the Waldenses obtained it from the Piedmontese. Neither in the valleys of the Alps, nor in France, had the pious presbyters, who were ordained over their congregational assemblies, wisdom or experience sufficient to guide such multitudes, under the pressure of persecutions scarcely second in malevolence, fury, and cruelty, to any that have been in the world. Unless the elders, mentioned in the passage quoted by them, were preachers, Titus ordained none in Crete; by elders, therefore, pastors must have been understood; and they seem to have availed themselves of the other general terms, as an authority for the choosing of



guides, to *set in order things which were wanting*; and save them from that extermination, which the anti-Christian hierarchy ever meditated, and unremittingly pursued; for in later times the edict of Nantz suffered the scion to grow, only that, by the nefarious revocation of that statute, it might be the more effectually extirpated.

## SECTION XXIII.

### OF OFFICES AND ORDINATIONS.

*The Jewish and gospel dispensations commenced with immediate inspiration. Legal toleration had been granted to the Jews, in the exercise of their own religion, it was necessary that the apostles should teach, baptize, and ordain as they did, but they claimed no priesthood, and ordained officers for the churches they erected, bishops or presbyters, one bench for every assembly, and deacons. Matthias, Paul, and Barnabas. There are no evangelists in the history of the church, except the first extraordinary preachers. The reception of the evangelists depended upon the recommendations of the apostles. Testimonies of Polycarp, Clement, Justin, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian. Letters assigned to Ignatius, "Apostolical Tradition." Firmilian, Cyprian, &c.—Ordinary officers were presbyters and deacons, and there were but two ordinations. The ordination which now constitutes a modern bishop, originated in gradual custom, first without hands, then with, and now rests upon canonical authority, and is no where found in the word of God.*

THE Mosaic economy terminated with the death of Christ, who was a minister of the circumcision. After his resurrection, he commissioned eleven apostles, to go and disciple all nations. They were to testify the things, which they had seen and heard; and reveal the truths, which should be suggested to their minds by the Holy Spirit. Such is the basis of all present authority for evangelizing the world. But it no more follows, that any regular preacher has the commission of an apostle to govern the general church, than that he possesses the gifts of such. For as none can be strictly apostles, that is, immediately instructed and sent by Christ, so none possess, either their inspiration and general authority, or their extraordinary power.

Under the theocracy, commissions were by conse-

cration, with imposition of hands.<sup>a</sup> The apostles being Jews, and tolerated in the Roman empire only as such, were guided by the Spirit to baptize, teach, and ordain, in the modes to which they had been accustomed. But they neither claimed, nor exercised a priesthood, nor considered ordination as an apostolical prerogative, but merely as a duty, incident to the greater work of discipling and teaching.

Whilst many justify innovations on the ground of expediency, not a few have thought, that a *right has devolved upon the church*, through the apostles, of government, discipline, and dispensing ordinances. The present prevailing forms of ecclesiastical government, having originated since the days of the apostles, do require some such vindication; for certainly there is neither apostolic precept, nor example for any ordination in a particular church, except those of bishops and deacons; and if bishops and presbyters be the same office, the additional ordination, whether of the diocesan bishop, or the lay presbyter, finds no authority in the word of God. But if the church possess the right to create new officers, and to transfer to them the government, and rite of ordination, this exceeds the claim of infallibility, it is to legislate in the place of God.

Matthias was elected, separated by lot, and numbered with the apostles, but was neither personally sent by Christ, nor ordained by imposition of hands, being an apostle only in the appellative sense, as was Barnabas. The first ordination was of seven deacons in the church at Jerusalem, chosen by the people, and set apart by prayer, and imposition of the hands of the apostles, there being as yet no presbytery. When the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch, prayed and imposed their hands on Saul and Barnabas, they seemed rather to have given a testimony of their concurrence to a mission, or apostleship, likely to awaken

<sup>a</sup> Num. viii. 10. xxviii. 18.

prejudices, than to have ordained them to an office. Timothy was ordained probably to be a presbyter, by the "laying on of the hands of a presbytery," who had been ordained for an individual church. Imposition of hands might designate, and publicly recognise persons; but it neither transmitted virtue, nor authority; nor defined duties. Paul's commission was, consequently, neither enlarged, nor restricted by the mission he received at Antioch. Nor was Timothy's office of evangelist, which was an extraordinary commission to aid the apostle of the Gentiles, produced by the act of a presbytery in his ordination to be a presbyter.

The primitive churches when duly furnished, had each its presbytery and deacons; and of necessity in planting churches, the apostles and evangelists did, when alone, respectively ordain presbyters in those which were new.<sup>b</sup> But afterwards the presbytery of every such church ordained successors to themselves, and also deacons, not by communicating any virtue, which they had derived mystically from the apostles or evangelists; but by assigning them, in the discharge of their own duty, with the consent of the people, a share in the government and service of the church.

The validity of offices in the church of Christ, is independent of the internal call. But both ordainers and ordained, should have reasonable grounds to be

<sup>b</sup> Paul and Barnabas returning to the churches which they had planted; "ordained presbyters for them in every church," χειροτονησαντες δε αυτοις πρεσβυτερους κατα εκκλησιαν with prayer and fasting. The Greeks used χειροτονεω for electing by lifting the hand. But Paul and Barnabas could not have thus voted, being but two, yet the act was theirs. Επιτιθημι is the expression for imposing hands. More must have been intended by χειροτονησαντες, than simply that they appointed; it must mean that they set them apart to the office of presbyters, for that was the effect, and such is expressed to have been the office, and it was with prayer and fasting. Although χειροτονεω implies not necessarily, either voting by lifting the hand, or ordaining by imposing the hand, for it is used for constituting Moses a ruler, and Aaron and his sons priests, by God himself; yet it is probable that Paul and Barnabas did ordain by imposition of hands.

satisfied of the truth of this grace; which is no more, than the ordinary change of heart or disposition, with a conviction, that it is the duty of the party to preach the gospel, and that he has the requisite knowledge, learning, talents, and soundness in the faith, to render him useful. The authority of the officers of the church is derived through the apostles, who received their commission from Christ in person, and were directed by the Holy Spirit, to provide teachers for the churches, in the manner they have done. If the case of Matthias, who received *επισκοπην*, an *oversight*, be not an exception, the apostolic authority and gifts were peculiar to those, who were commissioned by Christ after his resurrection; and the nearest approximation to theirs was the office of evangelist, which was also extraordinary and evanescent. No evangelists appear in the history of the church after the deaths of those who were cotemporaries of the apostles; nor do any other officers, except those of individual churches, for a century after the death of John, who died the last of the apostles. The first interpretation of a rule is generally and justly supposed to be the right one; the first condition of the churches establishes the only ordinary offices of the New Testament to have been those of the presbyter, called also bishop, and of the deacon; and the only ordainers, except the apostles and evangelists, appear to have been the presbyteries of the respective churches. The presbyter, who presided in each, denominated in the Apocalypse, the angel of the church, was consequently thus ordained, and to the same office with his brethren. Also, if the sacred word be alone competent to prescribe and define legitimate powers, and rightful commissions of officers in the church of Christ, there is to this day no higher grade, than that of presbyter; and no one inferior to the deacon; neither is there rightful ordination, but by presbyters. These may pray for the Holy Ghost to breathe upon those, on whom they put their hands; but have no power to communicate that blessing; and



that a moral virtue should proceed from the hands of any, who now ordain, is no more to be believed, than that the water in baptism should either physically, authoritatively, or mystically remove guilt. Words may invest authority, but "so send I you," did neither transfer the Mediator's commission, nor constitute the disciples priests. The apostles were ambassadors of God as well as witnesses of Christ; and being in all their work inspired of God, they were directed to appoint evangelists to plant churches; and ordain presbyters and deacons to teach, govern, and serve them. But when such were designated by ordination, the gospel was their law, or rule of conduct; and to this day, no power is communicated to supersede such rule, but the rightful offices and ordinances remain the same.

Titus, Timothy, and other evangelists, inferior in rank and gifts to the apostles only, went forth to the work; connected permanently with no particular church or churches, they superseded, during their stay, the ordinary officers in places already furnished, and ordained presbyters and deacons in those which were destitute. The works of the apostles procured that precedence and respect, to which their inspiration was entitled; the evangelists were chiefly regarded, because they spoke, and wrote the truths preached by the apostles; but no officers were left, when these were removed, except those connected with individual churches. Parochial and diocesan bishops, archbishops, primates, patriarchs, and popes, have all proceeded from presbyters, without any other scriptural ordination, than that, by which they may have been constituted presbyters. When convenience, or policy, had, after a lapse of time, introduced the rule, that no ordination by presbyters should be valid, *unless performed in the presence of the primus presbyter*, called for distinction the bishop, the laying on of the hands of Paul, 2 Tim. i. 6. with those of the presbytery, 1 Tim. iv. 14, was adopted as an argument to justify the novelty. But in still later times, Timothy, then deemed to have

been a bishop, appeared to have been ordained only as a presbyter, because in the *third century presbyters began to be excluded* from the ordination of a bishop. To avoid this difficulty also, and escape an opposition to the word of God, the presbytery, expressly so called, which ordained Timothy, was imagined to have been a council of bishops; "Because," says Chrysostom, "mere presbyters had no power to ordain a bishop;" a *petitio principii* worthy of the golden-mouthed father. But Jerom makes this occurrence an argument to prove presbyters and bishops to have been the same; for Paul had not Barnabas with him, at the time he received Timothy. Also there were no councils of bishops, except the presbyteries, in the respective churches. The case of Timothy, when he had been by modern rules, degraded from the office of evangelist to that of bishop, was still encumbered with remaining objections; for *no hands ought to have been imposed*, either by Paul, or the presbytery, upon him to make him a bishop; this being proper, by the apostolical canons, only to presbyters; the canons requiring, in the case of bishops, the holding the Scriptures over the head of him, who is to be ordained bishop, during the consecrating prayer. The canons, although a forgery of the fourth century, are evidence of the customs of their day, and do by this circumstance embarrass also the moderns, who suppose it an omission, although the reasons against such omission are conclusive. Timothy had been ordained by the presbytery of his church, in the absence of Paul. Afterwards Paul took him, as suitable help with him, and with his own hands, as usual, conferred the gifts necessary to an evangelist.

The letter of *Polycarp*, of high credibility, describes the officers of the church at Philippi only as *presbyters and deacons*. In the inspired letter of Paul to the same church, the officers are addressed as *bishops and deacons*; the terms presbyter and bishop being as yet used promiscuously, the same office is obviously intended by both. Valens had fallen into error, and the letter

of Polycarp, recognising the authority of the presbyters over their co-presbyter, and representing him as having been “made a presbyter among *them*,” clearly enough shows that the apostolic church at Philippi was under its own presbyters, who exercised the powers of ordination and excommunication. This being the first testimony after the apostles, and by one who lived with them, is decisive.

That the same was also the precise condition of the church at Corinth, when *Clement*, of whom Paul speaks, wrote from Rome his only undisputed letter to them, is obvious from its language: “Let any one among you, who is generous—say if the division is on my account—I go where you please, and will do what the multitude shall appoint, let the flock of Christ enjoy peace alone, *with the presbyters, πρεσβυτερων, who have been appointed over it.*”<sup>c</sup> Of these he speaks as having the gifts of *επισκοπης*, the *oversight*.<sup>d</sup>

When *Justin Martyr* wrote his two apologies for the Christians, which was within fifty years of John, there were only presbyters, whereof one in each church was *ὁ προεστώς* scil. *πρεσβυτερος*, the *presiding* (presbyter) who administered the eucharist, and deacons who carried it to the people. Ordination was of course performed at that period, by presbyters only.

Near the end of the second century *Irenæus* wrote against heretics, and relied chiefly on the certainty of the sameness of doctrines, by referring to the successions of bishops in the primitive churches, but whom he expressly represents as *presbyters, presiding among their brethren*. Such were Soter, Victor, and others in the catalogue of Popes, whom he terms *πρεσβυτεροι οὐ προεσταντες*, and if they were only *presiding presbyters*, their being also styled bishops, amounts not even to a presumption, that there had been a secondary ordination.

<sup>c</sup> Clement. epist. i. c. 54.

<sup>d</sup> τα δώρα της επισκοπης, c. 44.

*Clement of Alexandria* places bishops in honor before presbyters, because they occupied the *first seat*, *πρωτοκαθεδρία*, in the presbytery. Nevertheless, he makes but one order above deacons; also the ordination to the office of presbyter he mentions, but nothing of any subsequent ordination. He lived into the third century.

*Tertullian*, of the first part of the third century, gives the same representation of things at Carthage. He distinguishes bishops, presbyters and deacons; the presbytery was still of one church, and denominated *ecclesiastici ordinis consessus*. He speaks of one order only.<sup>e</sup> The idea of the bishop was still that of a presiding presbyter, for he denominates him *presidens*, *antistes*, and *summus sacerdos*; and mentions no ordination of such, but to make him a presbyter.

At no earlier a period than the first of the third century could the *letters attributed to Ignatius* have been written. They describe the bishop of an individual church as occupying the first seat, *προκαθημενον*; and a presbytery of preachers with deacons. But they discover no ordination, to remove a presbyter to the higher station of a bishop.

The "*Apostolical Tradition*," ascribed to the Hippolytus of the third century, being the same substantially with the eighth book of the supposititious "*Apostolical Constitutions*," represents a bishop and presbytery to have been in each particular church, and details minutely their respective investitures in office. The people, presbytery, and the neighbouring bishops, convene on a Lord's day, to set apart the person previously *chosen by all the people*. A bishop asks the presbytery and the people, if this is the person *whom they desire for a President*, *ὃν αἰτοῦνται εἰς ἀρχοντα*; and they consenting, it is again asked of his character. After the third con-

<sup>e</sup> *Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem,*" &c. Tertull. v. iii. p. 119.



sent, silence being made, "One of the first bishops, together with two others, standing near the altar, the rest of the bishops, and the presbyters, praying in silence, and the *deacons holding the divine gospels opened over the head of him*, who is ordained, let him say to God." Then follows the prayer. The ordination of a *presbyter is with imposition of hands*, and is described in these words. "When thou, O bishop, ordainest a presbyter, *do you yourself put the hand upon the head*, the presbytery standing near thee, and the deacons; and praying, say," &c. The prayer to consecrate the bishop, discovers, that he is to have the power of binding and loosing. The prayer, accompanied with the imposition of hands on a presbyter, expresses, that he is to edify the church by the word; and those for the deacon, deaconess, and subdeacons, which follow, speak only of service; and are also with the imposition of the hands of the bishop.

Presbyters having been from the first, ordained by imposition of hands; the appointment of one of these to preside, which was not by a second ordination, conferred on him neither a new order, nor office, and the ceremony of ordination was rightly excluded. It could not have been an *omission* for it is supplied by neither Hippolytus, nor the Constitutions. It cannot be *implied*, as some have alleged, because the idea of imposing hands occurs in neither, till they arrive at the scriptural ordinations. As the bishop and presbyter was then known to be the same office, originating in one ordination, the innovation would have been offensive; also the holding the Scriptures over the head was sufficiently distinctive. The ceremony of conducting the bishop unto, and seating him on his chief seat, is minutely described in both; and that points us to the origin of this canonical ordination. From apostolic times some mode of designation of a presbyter to the *first seat*, *πρωτοκαθεδρια*, must have existed. That it was deemed an ordination before the third century, is supported by no proof, but excluded by the isolated



condition of the individual churches, the subjugation of Christians to the Pagan establishment, the limited powers and actual services of the bishops or presidents, as well as by the introduction of the ordination without imposition of hands. Thus although the powers of the primus presbyter had accumulated through all the second century, especially in the larger cities, it was not before the middle of the third, that the designation to such presidency over his fellow presbyters, denominated by Jerom, "in gradu excelsiori collocatio," was considered as a second ordination. Then the influence of bishops, though parochial, became enlarged by consultations, and frequent communications, and the monopoly of the rite of ordination, under the pretext of preventing discordances among presbyters. Also the existence of one church only in a city, enhanced the authority of the bishops of the larger cities; where the presbyters, however numerous, constituting the presbytery of a single church, exercised their talents, except in Alexandria, under the direction of the presbytery, over which the bishop presided. The power of ordaining, and not his own commission, distinguished the parochial bishop. Had the canonical ordination commenced so early as the second century, bishops would have discovered their claims to the heritage, at a period prior to that assigned to the fact by veritable history. The division of ordinary grades into three, must have commenced with the re-ordination of presbyters to constitute them bishops; but the supposition, that this existed in the apostles' days, is not only entirely gratuitous, but perfectly chimerical.

When ordinations by presbyters had been generally superseded, their original powers were not forgotten. "The elders," says Firmilian, "preside, who possess the power of baptizing, imposing the hand, and ordaining."<sup>f</sup> They also sat in the first annual councils,

<sup>f</sup> "Ubi præsidunt majores natu, qui et baptizandi, et manum imponendi, et ordinandi possident potestatem." Cyprian, epist. 75.

in Asia Minor. "Every year, we, the elders and the presidents meet in one place, to dispose of the things committed to our care."<sup>g</sup> Even at Carthage, Novatus, whom Cyprian calls his co-presbyter,<sup>h</sup> ordained Felicissimus a deacon, without the permission or knowledge of his bishop,<sup>i</sup> which was neither declared void, nor immediately subjected to censure. Gregory Thaumaturgus, Phidimus, and Alexander, each ordained, and each had received but one ordination.<sup>k</sup> Nor have we found prior to the Cyprianic age, the ordination of any one to be a bishop, who had been previously a presbyter.

Ambrose the metropolitan of Milan, Nectarius of Constantinople, Eusebius the successor of Basil, Eucherius bishop of Lyons, Cyprian of Carthage, and Philogonius bishop of Antioch, are thought to have been laymen when ordained to be bishops. Athanasius bishop of Alexandria, Cæcilianus of Carthage; Agapitus, Vigilius and Felix, bishops of Rome, and Heraclides bishop of Ephesus, were never presbyters, except as bishops, having passed from the order of deacons to that of bishops. These and such examples, accruing soon after bishops and presbyters had been established by canon law to be distinct orders, accord with the fact that there had been from the first no ordination, except of the deacon and presbyter.

Constantine could not as a Christian, receive with the purple, the Pagan supremacy of Pontifex Maximus; but he established, instead of idolatry, the Christian church, by adopting the canons of the council of Nice as the supreme law of the Roman empire. Thus the ordinations of presbyters and deacons, according to the usages adopted in the different provinces and king-

<sup>g</sup> Per singulos annos, seniores et præpositi in unum convenimus ad disponenda," &c. Ibid.

<sup>h</sup> Epist. 15.

<sup>i</sup> "Diaconum nec permittente me, nec sciente—constituit." Ep'st. 52. Vide a later instance, Cassian 267.

<sup>k</sup> Gregor. Nyss. 2 vol. 979. idem. 995.

doms, were legalized; and in imitation of the idolatrous priesthood, a metropolitan was erected over each province, and his approbation was thenceforth necessary to every ordination of a bishop within his territories. The system of ecclesiastical government thus established, was somewhat multiform, because it had been removed from the apostolical plan in different degrees and various particulars, in the remote provinces and countries. But subsequent councils devised numerous canons, to reduce the different customs of distant churches more nearly to a common standard. Thus ecclesiastical authority, substituted by the laws of the empire in the place of the Pagan, though at first excusable as a defence against persecution, has, by worldly policy and priestcraft, grown into a hierarchy, which at different periods has proved an engine, even surpassing the former, in violence and blood.

The ascendancy gained by the presiding presbyters in the churches, furnished, to civil and ecclesiastical policy, a ready expedient for the substitution of a Christian, in the place of a Pagan priesthood. Yet was it well known, that the ordination of the bishop and of the presbyter was originally one and the same. Hilary the deacon, observed on 1 Tim. iii. "After the bishop, he, *Paul*, subjoins the ordination of the deacon. Why, unless because the ordination of the bishop and presbyter is the same?"<sup>1</sup> Acrius affirmed they differed in nothing; the order and the honor were one; the bishop imposes hands, and so does the presbyter.<sup>m</sup> Basil an aspiring metropolitan, acknowledged, that the things written by Paul to Timothy, and Titus, were spoken conjunctly to bishops and presbyters. Also his friend Gregory, who for a time was archbishop of

<sup>1</sup> Post episcopum diaconi ordinationem subjicit. Quare, nisi quia episcopi et presbyteri una ordinatio est? Ambros. tom. iii. 272.

<sup>m</sup>—ουθεν διαλλαξει υλος τωτων μια γαρ εστιν ταξις, και μια τιμη, χειροθετει—πισκοπος, αλλα και ο πρεσβυτερος.—Eriphan. lib. iii. vol. p. 906.

Constantinople, "wished there had been no first seat, priority of place, or tyrannical dictatorship;" showing that he esteemed the precedence adventitious. It is probable, that the peculiar disposition of Aerius, and the disappointed views of the pious bishop of Nazianzum, may have occasioned such expressions; yet were they not the less founded in truth. Chrysostom observed,<sup>n</sup> that bishops were superior to presbyters only in ordination. And Jerom asks, "what does a bishop, ordination excepted, which a presbyter does not."<sup>o</sup> They both speak of ordination, as it was in their own day, resting upon custom, and canons, established as laws of the empire, and not of ordination, as it had been left by the apostles. The former, in his flourishes, often accommodated the Scriptures to the usages of his own day; whilst the latter, equally favorable to ecclesiastical power, but of more extensive learning, and knowledge of history, has disclosed the same view of these things, which the truth still exhibits; "that a presbyter was the same as a bishop, and that the churches were governed by a common council of presbyters, but afterwards it was decreed throughout the world, that one, chosen from the presbyters, should be placed over the rest."<sup>p</sup> The evidence of these things has survived to this day; the numerous efforts to destroy it, and establish the contrary, notwithstanding. If the offices were one, they required but one ordination.

The sum is, that when the extraordinary officers, the apostles and evangelists, passed away, they left only

<sup>n</sup> Hom. 1 Tim. iii. 8.

<sup>o</sup> Epist. 85. ad Evagrium.

<sup>p</sup> "Idem est ergo presbyter, qui et episcopus—communi presbyterorum concilio ecclesiæ gubernabantur. Postquam vero in toto orbe decretum est, ut unus de presbyteris electus superponeretur cæteris."—Hieron. op. Tom. vi. 198. The "decretum est" he explains by "consuetudine."—p. 199. Augustine refers the superiority also to custom—"ecclesia" usus obtinuit, episcopatus presbyteris major sit. Tom. ii. Epist. ad Hier. He also asks "Quid est enim episcopus, nisi primus presbyter?" Tom. iv. 780.

presbyters and deacons in the churches: the duties and powers of whom were perspicuously detailed in the New Testament. Ordinations were consequently of those two kinds only, both of which were to be performed by the presbyters of the churches respectively. Ordination communicated no gift, virtue, or right; but merely designated the person as solemnly appointed to the work attached to such office in the sacred word: neither the truth nor the efficacy of the gospel, nor the validity nor utility of its ordinances, depending upon either the internal call, or the external commission. But although the ordination, which now adds the episcopal authority to the office of a presbyter, and is supposed to confer on the bishop the sole right to ordain, is merely founded on custom, and supported by ecclesiastical canons, and imperial decrees; and not by scriptural authority; and notwithstanding the ordination of lay elders is a still more modern invention, and wholly unknown to ancient Christians, yet may salvation be obtained, and the gospel faithfully preached under any form of church government.



## SECTION XXIV.

### THE INTRODUCTION OF LAY ELDERS BY CALVIN.

*No instance of a lay presbyter occurs in the history of the church before the Reformation.—They had no place among Catholics.—The Culdees of Scotland and Ireland were Catholics.—The Syrian Christians were episcopal, and were planted in the fourth century; the Vallenses or Piedmontese, the persecuted Bohemians and Moravians, and Waldenses of France, were all Catholics, and as really Episcopalian as the Eastern and Western churches.—They were introduced by Calvin as a compromise, under the name of inspectors, and quasi presbyters, as a check upon the clergy; but really to secure a majority on the Protestant side, in their new consistory at Geneva, where the Catholic clergy had defeated his efforts to reform, by their numbers.—How the expedient was successively adopted in other cantons, France, Netherlands, Scotland, and finally in America, in 1788.—But still many churches deny any scriptural warrant, and do as they always have done, choose and ordain deacons, and call them elders.*

WHEN they who compose, execute the laws, their own practice, under the rules they have indited, is the fairest criterion of interpretation. If lay presbyters had no existence in the first ages, commencing in the days of the apostles, and extending through four centuries; there is more than violent presumption, there is the strongest negative evidence, that they rest neither on precept nor example, in the church of Christ.

The government of the Christian church, from the death of the last apostle, unto that of the first Leo, after whom no change obtained, until the Reformation, has been detailed; that of the Waldenses, particularly investigated; and the common mistake with respect to their government exposed. They were covertly episcopal, though, after Claude, not papal; but never presbyterial, prior to the Helvetic abjuration of popery.

The Culdees, Colidei, *worshippers of God*, of Scotland and Ireland, the Scotia of ancient writers, have been passed in silence, because modern ideas of them rest only in vague traditions and opinions. The Celtic language had no alphabet. The Scots have no history, written within a thousand years of the Christian era; and little can be ferreted out of foreign authors. A sentence is found in Tertullian, and another in Prosper; both uncertain. Gildas of England, A. D. 560, represents them as episcopal. The earliest period assigned to the gospel among them by Bede of 730, was, when it was every where episcopal. Their oldest historian was an arch-deacon of St. Andrews, in the eleventh century; their second was of the thirteenth. Both are lost. Hector Boethius, quoted by Blondel and Selden, has been convicted by Lloyd of disingenuousness. The credulity of these writers, as well as of Buchanan and Knox, is on this point visible. Let their veracity remain unimpeached; belief is not knowledge, and neither can their offer, nor could our reception of it as testimony, make it truth. The Culdees who were removed from Abernethy to St. Andrews, were monks; and such were those at Armagh in Ireland. They may have been clerical, since in each place they elected arch-bishops; but they were Catholic, for they appealed to Rome. Columba, also, the apostle of the Picts, was, according to Bede, "a monk in priest's orders," and planted monasteries in Ireland and Britain.

The Syrian Christians, the Culdees, and the Waldenses, were all of episcopal origin. Old men have lived in every age, whose prudence and experience have been brought into requisition; but of presbyters without authority to preach, neither a word nor an example is found, from the demise of the last apostle, unto the Reformation in Switzerland; they neither existed in the original form of government, nor in the secondary, which was parochial episcopacy; nor in

that which absorbed the rest, the diocesan, which became, so far as we yet know, literally Catholic.

Such was christendom until the period of the Reformation. The Eastern church speaks for itself. Rome had been sacked in 1527, and the pope captured; also, Charles V. as well as Francis I. had defied the enmity of the court of Rome; nevertheless, they were both intolerant Papists, and maintained and enforced episcopal government. In England, the power of the pope had been abolished by parliament in 1532, yet the doctrines and ecclesiastic government, in other respects, remained the same. James V. then reigned in Scotland, and died in 1542, a devoted Catholic, leaving his kingdom under papal administration. The Reformation commenced in Germany in 1517. The protestation of Saxony, Hesse, Anhalt, and fourteen cities, against the violent measures of the diet at Spise, was signed in 1529. The Augsburg confession was made and condemned in 1530. The Protestant defensive league was entered into at Smalkald in 1531. But it was the papal, not the episcopal government, that had as yet been renounced. In Switzerland, in 1308, three cantons confederated: they afterwards subdued two others, and placed them on equal terms. In 1332, Lucerne acceded to the confederacy. In 1353, Berne and Zug joined them. In 1383, they sustained themselves against the duke of Austria. In 1471, they received the Grisons. In 1481, Friburg and Soleure, in 1501, Basil and Schaffhausen, and in 1513, Appenzel were admitted. In the battle of Nancy, they defeated and slew Charles the bold.

From 1526, when Zuinglius, the Swiss reformer, was excommunicated by a Catholic diet, unto the autumn of 1531, when his death was achieved, he offering himself a victim in defence of liberty of conscience and the cause of the Reformation, the cantons of Zurich and Berne, with the towns of Basil and Schaffhausen, maintained an unremitting struggle against

the intolerance of five Catholic cantons, which those, who were neutral, were unable to repress. But although Zurich and Berne, and Basil, and Schaffhausen, had abolished popery, and church temporalities within their territories, they had neither removed the subordination of ministers, nor created new offices in the church. At length, peace was restored, because their existence as free states was at last seen to depend upon their confederacy; and each was to adopt and maintain its own form of government, both civil and ecclesiastical; and public safety to be bartered away no more for religious predilections.

Calvin, passing by Geneva, in August, 1536, on his way northward, was importuned by some of the clergy, who were favorable to the reformation, to remain, and aid them in preaching, and to become a reader in divinity.

The season was favorable, the rulers and people having been exasperated by the conspiracy of their bishop with the duke of Savoy against their liberties; who, being chargeable also with crimes of a private nature, had fled away a few months before. Although the preachers of Geneva, as well as Calvin, and all the people, were Catholic, they were not, in fact, under episcopal government; and their submission to their pastors rested merely on persuasion. Of the six ministers of Geneva, two only were favorable to the doctrines of the reformation, and confidants of Calvin; the rest being licentious, and inclined in heart to popery. But a majority of the people were, from obvious motives, haters of ecclesiastical fraud, sensuality, and oppression. In this state of vacillation and licentiousness, Calvin adopted the expedient of preparing an outline of doctrine and discipline, to be sworn to and subscribed, as an antidote against popery. The obligation of an oath to adhere to the rules and doctrines advised by a minority of the ministers, was a perilous, but decisive measure. Nevertheless, it was taken by a majority in the summer of 1537.

In the next year, Farell, Calvin, and Corald, aiming at a stricter discipline, declared they could not administer the supper to people so irregular, and discordant among themselves. Advantage was immediately taken by the Catholics, and, within two days, a general council having been convened, they voted, that those three ministers should leave the city.

Calvin went to Zurich, and afterwards to Strasburg, where he became the pastor of a French church. Corald died. Farell retired to Neufchatel, and never consented to be again a minister at Geneva. Notwithstanding his exile, Calvin answered the letter of the bishop of Carpentras, written against the Reformation at Geneva; but would not hear the recantations of the Genevese. He refused to become a cypher among colleagues, and a people incompetent to discriminate between the discipline of Christ and papal tyranny.<sup>a</sup> He attended by appointment the conferences at Worms and Ratisbon, with Melancthon and others. Interest had been made in behalf of Geneva, and he was there pressed by the heads of the Reformation to return to that canton, as a thing indispensable. He yielded, upon condition he should not be interrupted in ecclesiastical discipline.<sup>b</sup> Accordingly, in September, 1541, he resumed his labors at Geneva, still subject to the claims of Strasburg, as Viret was to Berne, but the canton soon obtained his release. His colleagues professing reconciliation, and reaching out the hand, were suffered to remain; yet were they an incumbrance, possessing neither zeal nor learning.

To secure the ascendancy of himself and Viret over their co-presbyters, was the first necessary effort. "I detailed," he says, "to the senate my labor;

<sup>a</sup> — "Locum sine ullâ auctoritate teneam? Quid enim faciemus? Unde sumemus exordium, si res collapsas velimus instaurare? Si verbum fecero quod displicuerit, mox silentium imperabunt." Calv. epist. 12.

<sup>b</sup> — "Suo ipsi judicio obstricti erunt, ne reclament amplius, aut quicquam ad ordinem nostrum turbandum moveant." Epist. 25.



I showed them that the church could not stand, unless a certain form of government were appointed, such as is prescribed to us in the word of God, and was observed in the ancient church. I then touched certain heads, whence they might understand what I wished. But because the whole matter could not be explained, I begged that there should be given us those who might confer with us. Six were appointed to us. Articles will be written concerning the whole government of a church, which we shall afterwards lay before the senate."<sup>c</sup>

The colleagues of Calvin and Viret "openly assented, because they were ashamed to contradict in matters so public," but they secretly persuaded the senators not to abandon their power. They sought to "escape that discipline and order which they could not bear," and to "weaken the authority of the church."<sup>d</sup>

Before this proposition, no canton in Switzerland had, so far as is known, even the idea of a lay officer in the church, but every presbyter and every deacon was a preacher of the gospel. This reference was, nevertheless, not wholly without a precedent; for, in 1532, a committee had been appointed by parliament in England, half laymen and half ecclesiastics, with Henry VIII. at its head, to decide upon certain ecclesiastical constitutions, which were alleged to involve temporal rights, and subject them to spiritual censures.

The committee at Geneva reported; laws were prescribed; and a constitution instituted by the General Council, on the 20th November, 1541. The consistory was to contain a double number of laymen, chosen annually; that is, at first it consisted of the six ministers, two laymen from the lesser senate, or council of twenty-five; and ten from the greater, or

<sup>c</sup> Epist. 50.

<sup>d</sup> Epist. 54.

council of two hundred; one of the Syndics presiding.<sup>e</sup>

That Calvin did afterwards attempt to justify the reception of lay presbyters, from the authority of the Scriptures, his writings evince. It is perfectly clear, nevertheless, that it was adopted at first by him as an expedient for reducing the church at Geneva to a state of discipline, which should secure the reformation at that place. He probably preferred the name consistory, because the judicatory was composed of presbyters and laymen; for since ordination is by laying on of the hands of the presbytery, if those laymen were members of a presbytery, then they must impose hands, and give an authority which they possessed not. As if apprehensive, also, of the impropriety of denominating men presbyters who had received no ordination, he called them Inspectors; and such they really were, not as sometimes it is explained, of the morals of the people, but evidently of the designs of the clergy, whose bishop had, within one year before the arrival of Calvin, committed treason against the canton, from a desire to bring them back to the chains of popery.

Soon after he had gained a consistory, Calvin writes, "Now we have a judgment of presbyters, such as it is, and a form of discipline, such as the infirmity of the times could bear."<sup>f</sup>

<sup>e</sup> — "Non solos verbi ministros sedere iudices in consistorio; sed numerum diplomajorem, partim ex minori senatu, ex delectis senioribus esse, ut vocant, partim ex majore diligi, ad hæc unum fere ex syndicis præsidere." Epist. 167. "Deliguntur quotannis duodecem seniores; nempe ex minori senatu duo, reliqui ex ducentis, sive sint indigenæ sive ascriptitii cives. Qui probe et fideliter munere suo perfuncti sunt, loco non moventur; nisi, &c. Antequam ab electione suâ sedeant, eorum nomina publice eduntur, ut si quis eos indignos cognoverit mature denunciat." Epist. 302. Southey, in "The Book of the Church," 2d vol. p. 293, says, "Calvin himself" was "perpetual president;" an error perfectly in character for a mere compiler.

<sup>f</sup> "Nunc habemus quaecunque presbyterorum judicium, et formam disciplinæ qualem ferebat temporum infirmitas." Epist. 54.

The presbyters here intended were the preachers, for he then thought of no others, and represents that he had succeeded in obtaining a tribunal, in which the sentence of a presbytery might be judicially given, according to the original mode of ecclesiastical trials among the early Christians; nevertheless, he qualifies his representation by the words "such as it is," not "such as they are," for the judgment to be rendered by the presbyters would be under the control of the duplicate rates of lay members in the consistory. Of this Calvin had, nevertheless, no reason to complain; for what could he have effected without laymen, when the major number of the clergy were really Catholic, and hostile to a reformation, in doctrines, discipline, and manners? They had caused his banishment, when his clerical minority was greater. They were secretly opposed to his return; and even at the time of their public gratulations, resisted clandestinely the new government, "as rigid, tyrannical, and contrary to the practice of the other churches, which governed without such articles."

The people were suspicious, for they had learned by experience to be jealous of clerical power, and were disposed to weaken it,<sup>g</sup> alleging that "Moses; a secular prince, had prescribed to Aaron, and David to the priests." So arduous was the work of reformation at Geneva, that Calvin declared that without Viret he could not preserve that church.<sup>h</sup>

In 1553, a question arose upon their articles of agreement; the senate claiming an appellative jurisdiction in all causes decided by the consistory; but the original intention was merely to secure, in certain cases, the intervention of civil authority. One Bertelier had been suspended from the communion by

<sup>g</sup> —"I.aici—in potestate positi, si quando possint, nos, qui verbo prosumus, auctoritatemque nostram labefactare. Epist. 47.

<sup>h</sup> "Si me Viretus auferatur prorsus perii, nec hanc, ecclesiam salvam retinere poterō." Epist. 39.

the consistory. He complained to the senate, who heard the reasons of the sentence, and confirmed it. Within half a year, he applied to them again for restoration. Calvin was again heard. But the senate restored the offender. Calvin declared that he preferred resignation to compliance.

The senate of Geneva, in compromise, asked the advice of the senate of Zurich, on three questions: the first was concerning excommunication; the second, whether it could not be exercised in some other manner than by a consistory? and the third was for advice how to act. To these it was answered by the other senate—"That they had heard of the consistorial rules of the church at Geneva, acknowledged them to be pious, and near to the prescript of the word of God; and, therefore, could not advise a change, especially at that period."<sup>i</sup> That the pastors of the Protestant churches at Zurich, Berne, Schaffhausen, and Basil, considered themselves to be deeply interested, at that time, in supporting Calvin, and obtaining the approbation of their senates, appears by their letters.

In 1554, he observed—"That the conflict was over, and peace restored; after the church at Geneva had fluctuated, like Noah's ark upon the waters," yet that he was still apprehensive." That when invited into the public assembly, he had freely forgiven every one who had repented; but that he, being but one of the consistory, did not arrogate the right of representing the church."<sup>k</sup>

Calvin prevailed to establish an order of government, as nearly approximating the original form, as

<sup>i</sup> —"Audivisse nos de legibus ecclesiæ consistorialibus, et agnoscere illas pias esse, et accedere ad verbi Dei præscriptum: ideoque non videri admittendum, ut per innovationem mutentur, hoc præsertim seculo," &c. Epist. 166.

<sup>k</sup> "Tandem huc ventum est, ut inter se omnes reconciliarentur,"—"Acris erat dimicatio,—brevis tamen rursus certandum erit." Epist. 171.

the dissolute morals, and fixed prejudices of the Genevese against ecclesiastical tyranny, would allow.

Of the original parity of presbyters, Calvin could not have been ignorant; into that state the church of Geneva had providentially fallen by their abandonment of papal authority, and by the flight of their bishop. Of a re-establishment of episcopacy no one appears to have thought; nor did there occur a syllable about an inferior order of presbyters. He could have seen nothing of the kind in any Christian writer before his day.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of laymen into the church of Geneva, thus originated, not from a previous design to introduce an inferior kind of presbyters, but from the exigencies of their condition. The success of the expedient, led others in similar circumstances, to the adoption of the same measure. Could they have so far counteracted the influence of the customs then prevalent, as to have separated the idea of a preacher from that of a deacon, and distinguished their coadjutors by this name, instead of that of inspectors, they had not erred: but dropping that office into practical oblivion, the next effort appears to have been, to justify what they had done; and as this task naturally devolved upon the inventor, so no man was better qualified to essay its accomplishment, than Calvin.

The first imitators of his consistorial government, were the neighboring cantons. He claimed his own

<sup>1</sup> In his Institutes he speaks of but one order. Lib. iv. c. iv. 1. "*Ex ordine presbyterorum partim eligebantur pastores et doctores: reliqua pars censuræ morum et correctionibus præerat.*" But in his commentaries, which he wrote in 1556, he says: (1 Tim. v. 17)—"Sane expopulo deligebantur graves et probati homines, qui una cum pastoribus communi consilio et autoritate ecclesia, disciplinam administrarent, ac essent quasi censores moribus corrigendis." "Hunc morem Ambrosius abolevisse conqueritur," &c. Ambros. Oper. tom. iii. p. 276. But the writer (Hilary the deacon) is speaking only of old age, in both sexes as honorable; and that, both in the synagogue and church, nothing was wont to be done without the advice of the Seniors.



invention, when a church sought his advice, upon the form they had taken from him.<sup>m</sup> The clergy of Basil desired the same defence, which Calvin had made the condition of his return to Geneva. After the experiment had proved successful, Schaffhausen, Zurich, and Berne, adopted forms of church government of a kindred nature.

The Scottish reformer visited Geneva in 1554, and became a disciple of Calvin. Among the exiles both at Frankfort and Geneva, Knox used, "The order of Geneva."

In 1559, he left Geneva for the last time. In 1560, he was appointed, with others, to report in writing a book for common order and uniformity in religion, for the church of Scotland.

In January following, the first book of discipline was approved conditionally by the Secret Council, and adopted in practice in the church, but was never formally established by an act of parliament. The superintendents were temporary officers, subject to the presbyteries, and without the claim either of dignity or permanency; the form was, therefore, mainly presbyterian, but rejected imposition of hands in ordination. In 1562, the session of Edinburgh contained twelve elders, and sixteen deacons; the latter of whom were allowed to teach. The first was superseded by the second book of discipline, which restored imposition of hands in the ordination of preachers, and reduced deacons to their original duties. The second was agreed on by the General Assembly in 1578, and was, as well as the assembly itself, established by act of Parliament, at Edinburgh, in June, 1592. Thus was the office of lay elders brought from Geneva to Scotland.

Whether Calvin "aimed at nothing else than rendering the government, discipline, and doctrine of Ge-

<sup>m</sup> "Certe nimix esset impudentix, id ipsum improbare in vobis, quo nos tanquam bono et salutari utimur." Epist. 55.

neva, the mould and rule of imitation to the reformed churches throughout the world," as Mosheim alleges, it is not necessary here to affirm; but that his learning and talents rendered his example in church government conspicuous, and gained him an influence in distant countries co-extensive with the Reformation, is certain.

Geneva and Lausanne, from their contiguity to France, so greatly influenced the work of reformation in that kingdom, that so early as 1550, the reformed societies of that country were generally in communion with the church of Geneva, and had adopted the doctrines of Calvin. The Gallic confession, exhibited to Charles IX. in 1561, thus expresses their views: "We believe, that the true church ought to be governed by that discipline which our Lord Jesus Christ has decreed; namely, that there should be in it pastors, presbyters or seniors, and deacons; that purity of doctrine may be preserved, vices restrained, the poor and others in affliction provided for," &c.<sup>n</sup> In that same year, Charles IX. wrote to the council of Geneva, complaining of their having received and fostered the enemies and disturbers of France.

Calvin and his colleagues were for that cause summoned before them. They acknowledged, that the pastors of the canton had sent pious men to regulate the churches in France, but upon their solicitation, and not to sow trouble. Also, Calvin professed himself ready to answer before the king; but the matter was not prosecuted further. Nevertheless, his letters show an extensive influence upon the reformation in France.

In the next century, when the subject of church government was better understood, the churches were left by the acts of the synod of Charenton in 1645, to their choice on the subject of elders. "We

<sup>n</sup> D. XXIX.—"In ea sint pastores, presbyteri sive seniores, et diaconi," &c.

agree the office of deacon is of divine appointment, and that it belongs to their office to receive, lay out, and distribute the church's stock to its proper use, by the direction of the pastor, and the brethren, if need be. And whereas divers are of opinion, that there is also the office of ruling elders, who labor not in word and doctrine, and others think otherwise, we agree, that this difference make no breach among us."<sup>o</sup>

Calvin's discipline spread from France to the Netherlands. For these churches, when scattered by persecution, held a synod at Emden in 1569, at which it was agreed—"That in the French congregations, the Geneva catechism might be held; and in the Dutch, that of Heidelberg." Also, they declared that, "No church shall have, or exercise dominion over another, and no minister, elder, or deacon, shall bear rule over others of the same degree;" which is Calvin's order.

The first presbytery erected in England, was convened in 1572, when eleven elders were chosen, and their proceedings were entitled, "The orders of Wardsworth;" imitating the style of the order of the church at Geneva.

These Presbyterians chiefly consisted of exiles, who had returned from Geneva, Frankfort, &c. to England, after the death of the bloody Mary; and conformed more nearly to the order of Calvin than Knox was able to do; having neither Synods nor a General Assembly. The Independents, whether originating in England in the end of the sixteenth, or in Holland early in the seventeenth century, and at whatsoever period they adopted their charitable regulation, that neither the adoption nor rejection of the office of lay elders, should make any breach among them, have certainly, so far, yielded to the influence of the polity of Calvin.

In the Presbyterian church in the United States, a

<sup>o</sup> Quick, p. 472. Third synod, &c. ch. xiii. s. 5.

similar compromise has obtained; and every congregation is at liberty to have elders, or deacons, or both; and to elect them in their own way. The ordination of whom is without imposition of hands, because it is so in Scotland; and Knox omitted the rite because he observed it was so at Geneva; or the novelty of such an ordination, like that of a presbyter, to constitute him a bishop, might have produced the delay in its adoption, lest suspicion and investigation should have been awakened; and the authority and previous example should have been demanded. In which event, the one could no more be supported than the other. If they be presbyters, they should receive ordination by a presbytery. But we charge them as deacons, and they do the work of such. Yet even thus, the mode of their ordination in the Presbyterian church merits a revision.

It has now fairly resulted from this investigation, that a special form of ecclesiastical government was adopted by the Genevese at the Reformation; not because it was found by Scriptural precept or example to have been the original apostolic scheme; but because the nearest approach to the true one, which the peculiar circumstances of the canton, and the exigencies of the times would admit. The learned and prudent reformer has shown, that he did wish a presbytery, but a consistory was all that he could obtain; for the reformation of the canton was seen to be impracticable, unless his party could have the ascendancy in clerical councils; and this was impossible, without the introduction of laymen. Yet this design was not prominent; they were associated as inspectors of the conduct, and so as a defence against the wiles of the ecclesiastics.

Had Calvin justified the expedient by the necessity of the case, he would have betrayed his design, and prevented others from the benefit of his example; but he gave ease to his conscience, and plausibility to his conduct, by seeking a defence from the Scriptures.

And his opinion was readily adopted, because ecclesiastics, a few reformers excepted, were every where inimical to the Reformation, and disposed to rivet the chains of papal despotism. It was natural, therefore, that "the pattern on the mount," as it has been called, which had proved so successful at Geneva, should be followed by others, and become a similar defence against ecclesiastical fraud and oppression.

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## TO J. L.

THE argument from the Scriptures has not yet arrived; matters of fact, accruing since the sacred record, have been the inquiry. Hilary's words were adduced only as testimony of the state of the church then present: his opinion of things prior to his time would be mere hearsay. When we take up the holy Word, it will speak for itself; no interpreter can be trusted, but Hooker will not be forgotten on Rom. xii. 7, 8. The fathers are miserable commentators; Hilary not excepted, though without lawn-sleeves; yet are they, from the necessity of the case, competent witnesses of facts, which were under their own sight and hearing.

Hilary the Younger, represented the same kind of seniors to be in every nation, and in the synagogue, which were in the church; (Ambros. tom. iii. p. 276;) they were consequently not officers. Also, by censuring, not the omission of an office, but that pride, which, by neglect of consulting the old men, suffered the custom to become obsolete, he supposed the seniors, of whom he spoke, still to exist, who were, of course, laymen. J. L. admits, that these seniors were "not a third order in the church," and J. P. W. asks no more. That "these elders—were the deacons," J. L. is at



liberty to prove, if he can; could he be successful, the discovery would be some excuse for all of us in the Presbyterian church, who ordain and charge men as deacons, because the word is so; and afterwards call them elders, because such is the custom.

What J. L. demands has been already shown.<sup>p</sup> The *exaltation* of *servants*, διακονοι, to the office of teachers; and the wisdom of Calvin in *obliterating*, rather than *degrading*, deacons; when, availing himself of the anarchy of his canton, he placed laymen as *inspectors*, but really for protectors, in his *consistory*, have already passed in detail.

P “Διακονοι διδουσιν εκαστω των παροντων μεγαλαβειν απο του εχαρισθηθεντος αρλου,” &c. Justin Martyr, Apol. i. § 86. By the synod of Ancyra, A. D. 314, it was decreed, that those deacons who succumbed to persecution, should not αρλον η ποτηριον αναφερειν η κηρυσσειν, &c. Canon II. “Diaconi ergo ordo est, accipere a sacerdote et sic dare plebi.” Ambros. tom. iv. p. 779.

## SECTION XXV.

*The primitive state of the church having been sought from credible witnesses of the facts, without regard to their opinions, or hearsays; and the changes marked from the commencement of the second to the termination of the fifth century, and having seen the successive introduction of parochial and diocesan episcopacy, the canonical ordination and human authority of the latter, and the creation of quasi presbyters by Calvin, we are prepared better to understand the New Testament by the rejection of these novelties. But bishops are by some supposed to be the successors of the evangelists, and Timothy is made bishop of Ephesus.—How Timothy received authority and for what purpose. An evangelist before he came to Ephesus. He was left by Paul at Ephesus, the last time Paul was there, Timothy having returned thither after Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Timothy left Ephesus after ordaining presbyters there, and came to Paul in Macedonia, before his return to Jerusalem and first imprisonment. The first letter to Timothy was before he left Ephesus to go to Paul in Macedonia, and instructed him in choosing and ordaining the presbyters. He accompanied Paul to Jerusalem and Rome, where he was during the Apostle's first imprisonment. The second letter to Timothy was written during the second imprisonment, and discovers that Timothy was not then at Ephesus; it calls him to Rome; and it no where appears that Timothy ever returned to Ephesus after ordaining the elders there.*

THE facts in the history of the church, which might aid us in deciding upon the nature of the offices mentioned in the New Testament, having been investigated; we are prepared to inquire into the written word, on the matters of church government. Although the particular form is but a mean to an end, and of no vital importance; yet it is expedient to defend the cause which God honors, against those exclusive pretensions which have been founded in usurpation.

Two things having been established; that episcopacy, whether parochial or diocesan, was not in exis-

tence at the commencement of the age which next followed the days of the apostles, but arose afterwards step by step; and that lay presbyters were never heard of till necessity drove Calvin to the expedient; they ought to have no place in the interpretation of the New Testament.

But it so happens, that the conformity in duties between the diocesan bishop and the apostle and primitive evangelist; and the contrast of the oversight of an individual church by its presbyters, with an episcopate in after ages;—are now adopted as arguments to prove, contrary to the verity of facts, that diocesan bishops are actually the successors in office of the apostles and evangelists, and not of the presbyters in the churches. Thus Timothy and Titus are exhibited as scriptural examples of bishops, though never once designated by that name in the sacred records. Titus is described by Paul as his “partner” and “fellow-laborer,”<sup>a</sup> Of Timothy he also speaks, as his “fellow-laborer,” and an “evangelist.”<sup>b</sup> Their work appears to have been to ordain bishops, in the sense of presbyters. Timothy was invested with an office, “by prophecy with the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.”<sup>c</sup> And in another epistle, Paul speaks of the “gift of God which was in him by the imposition of his hands.”<sup>d</sup> These texts, we have seen, were differently understood in successive ages, according to the progressive advances of episcopacy.<sup>e</sup>

This commission was given him before Paul had visited Ephesus, and without relation to the people of one place more than another. It was in its nature universal, extending alike to the whole church, and con-

<sup>a</sup> Κοινωνος εμος και εις υμας συτεργος. 2 Cor. viii. 23.

<sup>b</sup> Εργον ποιησον ευαγγελιστου. 2 Tim. iv. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Δια προφητειας μελα επιθεσεωσ των χειρων πρεσβυτεριου. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

<sup>d</sup> χαρισμα του Θεου, ο εστιν εν σοι δια της επιθεσεωσ των χειρων μου. 2 Tim. i. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Vide Section xxiii.

ferring every power necessary to planting, watering, and governing the churches, wherever he should come, if not superseded by the presence of an apostle.

The office was like those of apostle and prophet, extraordinary and unconnected with any particular charge, Ephes. iv. 11. But in whatsoever church he preached, he could as evangelist ordain pastors, or bishops, or there was no propriety in the caution, "lay hands suddenly on no man." This office was superior to that of "pastors *even* teachers."

Evangelists were not personally instructed and commissioned by Christ; nor had they the extraordinary gifts in equal extent, nor the unerring assistance, or inspiration of the apostles, for the writings of Mark and Luke were received upon the authority of Peter and Paul.

That Paul and Timothy were together at Ephesus, and that Paul left him there when he went on some occasion into Macedonia, may be plainly inferred from 1 Tim. i. 3. "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia." The time to which there is here an allusion is the more easily ascertained, because the apostle is recorded to have been twice only at Ephesus; on the first occasion, he merely called on his voyage from Corinth and Jerusalem; on the second, he went from Ephesus into Macedonia, according to the words of the epistle.

That Timothy was left at Ephesus, when Paul, expelled by the riot, went into Macedonia, obtains satisfactory proofs. Before he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, but he himself remained in Asia for some time. Acts xix. 22. 1 Cor. iv. 17. xvi. 10. In the first letter to the Corinthians, which he wrote at Ephesus, and sent by Titus to Corinth, he mentioned his purpose of coming to them, but not immediately; of which Luke also informs us, Acts xix. 21, and desired them, if Timothy came to them, 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11, to con-

duct him forth in peace, that he might come to Paul, then at Ephesus, for he looked for him, with the brethren. When he closed that letter, he was expecting Timothy's return, which that letter might also have hastened. Paul remained at Ephesus, on this visit, the space of three years. Acts xx. 31. There is therefore no reason to suppose, that he was disappointed in his expectation of the arrival of Timothy from Corinth at Ephesus, before he went into Macedonia; and if so, he might have left him there, as he at some period certainly did. 1 Tim. i. 3. He had intended to go by Corinth into Macedonia, 2 Cor. i. 15, 16, but changed his mind and went by Troas thither. 1 Cor. xvi. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13. Whilst in Macedonia, he wrote his first letter to Timothy; for he proposed to him to remain at Ephesus until he should call there on his way to Jerusalem. 1 Tim. i. 3; iii. 14, 15. The words imply, that Paul might tarry some time; and that he did so before he went into Greece, is fairly implied in the expression, "And when he had gone over those parts, and given them much exhortation, he came into Greece." Acts xx. 2. Timothy was advised, solicited, or besought (*παρακαλῆσα*) to abide still at Ephesus, which gave him liberty to exercise his discretion, but several motives must have influenced him to go to the apostle. The enemies at Ephesus were numerous and violent; Timothy was young; his affection for Paul ardent; the request of Paul that he should abide at Ephesus was not peremptory; and Paul told him he expected to tarry a long time. Also Timothy had been, from their commencement, familiarly acquainted with the churches in Macedonia and Greece. Accordingly we find Timothy in Macedonia when Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians. 1 Cor. i. 1. The apostle went from Macedonia into Greece, Acts xx. 2, as he had promised in that letter, chap. xiii. 1, and abode there three months. Acts xx. 3. Timothy was with him at Corinth, for he sends his salutations to the



Romans, Rom. xvi. 21, in that famous epistle written from thence.<sup>f</sup>

That there was sufficient time for Paul to have written from Macedonia to Timothy at Ephesus, and for Timothy to have spent some months at Ephesus, before he came to Paul in Macedonia, appears from the time he waited for Titus at Troas, 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13, his determination not to go to Corinth till he could do it without heaviness, 2 Cor. ii. 1, his distress in Macedonia before Titus arrived, 2 Cor. vii. 5, and his success in raising charities for the saints in Judea, 2 Cor. viii. 2, 3; ix. 4. He had intended to tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost, 1 Cor. xvi, 8, but went sooner, Acts xx. 1. He passed on to Jerusalem at another Pentecost, Acts xx. 16; all which time he was in Macedonia, except three months. Acts xx. 3.

That Paul expected to spend so much time in Macedonia, and Greece, may be collected from his intimation 1 Cor. xvi. 6, that he might spend the winter with the Corinthian church. The apostle's purpose of sailing from Corinth was disappointed by the insidiousness of his own countrymen; he therefore went up into Macedonia again, that he might pass over to Troas with his companions. Timothy was among those who crossed first. Acts xx. 3, 5. Paul's disappointment in sailing from Corinth, and his wish to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost, prevented the call he intended at Ephesus, 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15, but he landed at Miletus, and sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus.

The directions of the apostle in the third chapter of the first epistle to Timothy, fairly imply that he had left the church at Ephesus, according to his usual practice, without officers; for he gives this evangelist not a new commission, he already had power to ordain, but instructions as to the choice of bishops, that is pres-

<sup>f</sup> Compare Acts xviii. 2, with Rom. xvi. 3. Vide Acts 19, xviii. 26. 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

byters, and deacons. These had been complied with before he landed at Miletus. Acts xx. 17. This record of the existence of elders at Ephesus, compared with the directions given to Timothy, not only renders it probable that Timothy had ordained them, but fortifies the presumption that the first epistle to Timothy was written in Macedonia, before this visit to Jerusalem, and consequently before his imprisonment.

The language "I going (*πορευομενος*) into Macedonia, besought thee to abide still at Ephesus," did not form a permanent connexion between Timothy and Ephesus. At the very greatest extent, the instructions given in this letter were of a continuance only till Paul should come to him (*εως ερχομαι*) 1 Tim. iv. 13; iii. 14. But it is certain, that Timothy did not remain at Ephesus, till Paul passed on his way to Jerusalem.

The second epistle of Timothy will prove itself written by Paul when a prisoner at Rome; and at least establishes the absence of the evangelist from his spiritual father, at the time it was written. But he was at Rome in the time of the first imprisonment, as has been proved by his having been joined with Paul in the letters to the Colossians, Philippians and Philemon. Demas and Mark were also there in the first imprisonment, Col. iv. 10. 4, but absent at the writing of the second to Timothy. 2 Tim. iv. 10, 11.

It is therefore an error to suppose it to have been written before the epistle to the Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon, during the first imprisonment. Also in 2 Tim. iv. 20, Paul tells him, Erastus abode at Corinth; but this needed not to have been told to Timothy, if Paul meant that Erastus abode at Corinth, when he went to Jerusalem, and so to Rome, for Timothy was then with him, and must have known the circumstance, had it been so. In like manner he says, *ibid.* "Trophimus have I left at Miletum, sick." But Trophimus was not left at any place on the voyage to Jerusalem, for he was there and the occasion of the jealousies of the Jews. Acts xxi. 29.

These two facts, compared with this, which appears in the epistle, that it was written by Paul a prisoner at Rome, afford sufficient certainty, that there was a second imprisonment when this letter was written.

But it by no means follows, that Timothy was at Ephesus when the second epistle was written. This ought not to be assumed, but shown. If Timothy was then at Ephesus, why should he have been told. "I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus?" 2 Tim. iv. 12. He must have arrived at that place before the letter, and the fact could have been then known. Also Tychicus needed no introduction to Timothy. Had Timothy been at Ephesus, Paul would not have sent him to Troas, for articles he had left there. It appears more probable, that Timothy was, at the time the epistle was sent to him, at Troas, or in the neighbourhood of that place. The salutations will not establish the destination of the epistle. Onesiphorus resided in Asia, but the particular place of his abode is not known. He helped Paul both at Ephesus, and Rome. Also Aquila, who had resided at Rome, at Corinth, at Ephesus, and again at Rome, was a native of Pontus, on the margin of the Euxine. Trophimus, whom Paul had left at Miletum, was an Ephesian. Acts xxi. 29. Miletus was near Ephesus, and Timothy would have known the facts, unless Miletum in Crete was the place.

If Timothy was not at Ephesus when the second letter was written to him, there is no evidence of his being in that city, after Paul's first imprisonment. But if he had been at Ephesus, he must have then left it, the letter calling him to Rome, and the sacred records speak not of his return to that city. The second epistle assigns to Timothy no other duties than those proper to his general office of Evangelist; and bears no relation to a particular oversight of any church or churches.

Some writers suppose that Paul, when he landed at Miletus on a subsequent voyage to Jerusalem, left Ti-

mothy with the elders of the church at Ephesus, "to govern them in his absence." But nothing of the kind was spoken on the occasion; and instead of a temporary absence, Paul assured the elders they should "see his face no more." In 1 Tim. i. 3, it is not said, "when I went to Jerusalem," but expressly, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, *when I went into Macedonia.*" Also it has been asserted, that the apostle, having placed Timothy at Ephesus prior to his first imprisonment, "wrote both his epistles to Timothy while a prisoner at Rome." But Timothy was with Paul at Rome during a part of the first imprisonment, for he is joined in the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Salutations also might have been expected in the first epistle to Timothy, had it been written from Rome, as in those to the Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and the Hebrews. He was indeed absent from Rome during a part of the time of the first imprisonment, but Paul expected his return, Heb. xiii. 23, and so far was he from hoping to come unto Timothy shortly, as expressed in 1 Tim. iii. 14, he promises, if Timothy come shortly to Rome, with him to visit the Hebrews. Also it seems strange, if Timothy had been at Ephesus when the epistle to the Ephesians was sent by Tychicus, Ephes. vi. 21, that no notice whatever should have been taken of the beloved youth.

Another hypothesis is, that Paul, when the Jews deterred him from sailing from Corinth, and he determined to go through Macedonia to Jerusalem, besought Timothy to abide still at Ephesus; to which, when Timothy agreed, he went forward to Troas, with Aristarchus and the rest; and whilst waiting there for Paul, Timothy received the first epistle from the apostle, written in Macedonia. But this is a departure from the correct meaning of the passage, which is that Paul besought Timothy *προσμειναί*, to *continue* or remain at the place where Timothy was at the time he was thus entreated. Those who went be-



fore with Timothy to Troas are represented to have accompanied Paul into Asia. Acts xx. 4, 5. This circumstance renders it an improbable supposition, that Paul should write so long and important a letter to his fellow traveller, whom he must overtake in a few days; and wholly unaccountable, that he should say in the letter, 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15, "these things write I unto you, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long," &c. That Paul should have thus purposed to come to Timothy unto Ephesus, but really at Troas; and in a few weeks afterwards, without any apparent cause for a change of views, should have said at Miletus to the elders of the church of Ephesus, "I know that ye all shall see my face no more," Acts xx. 25, exhibits a fluctuation approximating versatility. If Timothy was on this occasion left with the officers of the church at Ephesus, and especially, if he was to be thenceforth their diocesan bishop, it is strange that not a word of either of those circumstances should have been mentioned to those elders. But so far was the apostle from mentioning their subordination unto, or support of the authority of young Timothy, that he enjoins them; "take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *ἐπισκοπους* bishops, to feed the church of God," &c. But as not a word is said of leaving Timothy at Miletus so it is improbable that he should have parted from Paul there, because he appears to have been of the company of the apostle, when he arrived at Rome, where he is joined with him in the letters which have been mentioned.

Others allege, that Paul visited Ephesus after his first imprisonment, left Timothy there, went into Macedonia, and from thence wrote to him his first letter. They build upon the circumstances, that whilst at Rome he had written to Philemon to prepare him lodgings at Colosse; and that he had told the Philippians, by letter, he trusted he should shortly come to them.



This opinion is much more respectable than either of the former ; and although several of the fathers have positively asserted, what is incompatible with it, that Paul went into Spain, after his first imprisonment, according to his purpose expressed Rom. xv. 28, yet, however credible these holy men were, their conjectures deserve often but little regard. That Paul was at Philippi after his imprisonment is probable, because he left Erastus at Corinth. 2 Tim. iv. 20. Also he may have been at Colosse, if he left Trophimus at Miletus ; but the place was Miletum. *ibid.* He entertained a purpose subsequent to those, of visiting Judea with Timothy. Heb. xiii. 23. This may have been first accomplished, and Timothy left in the neighbourhood of Troas, where he remained till the second epistle was sent to him. But if these purposes were effectuated, which is matter of uncertainty, there is not a word to prove even an intention to visit Ephesus. The letter to the Ephesians neither mentions Timothy, nor any coming of Paul. But Tychicus, a faithful minister of the Lord, and companion of the apostle was named as sent to them. Ephes. vi. 21. To the Ephesians Paul had said, that he knew they should "see his face no more," and it is no where shown that he did. The supposition that nevertheless Paul afterwards went to Ephesus with Timothy, left him there, with the request to tarry till he should return to him, and then went into Macedonia, and wrote his first epistle to Timothy, is entirely gratuitous and without the least reason appearing in any exigencies of the Ephesian church ; which had had three years of Paul's labors, and had been afterwards long blessed with the regular administration of the ordinances by pastors of their own, besides help from Tychicus, and perhaps others.

If Paul constituted Timothy bishop of Ephesus, it is an affirmative, and ought to be proved. But Paul tells the presbyters of Ephesus at Miletus that the Holy

Ghost had made them *bishops* (*επισκοπους*) of that church. Those elders had previously received the powers which were necessary to ordaining others; on Timothy a similar presbytery laid their hands at his ordination. If this circumstance will not show that a presbytery could have ordained an evangelist, an apostle not being present, because evangelists were extraordinary officers of a higher grade; yet it must prove that a presbytery have some power to ordain. They were the highest fixed officers in a church, and the power of ordination was necessary to their succession. They could not have been appointed coadjutors to Timothy, in the ordination of themselves. And it does not appear they were ordained before the riot, when he was left at Ephesus. If thus there were no officers in that church when Paul left it, the direction to Timothy, who was an evangelist, to ordain bishops, that is, elders in Ephesus, was to do no more than his duty; which, when accomplished in any church, gave such bishops, or elders, power to continue the succession. If the presbyters of particular churches had not the power of ordination, there has been no succession in the church of Christ since the deaths of the apostles and evangelists; for their offices expired with them and there were no officers of a higher order. The office of Timothy was given to him prior to his visiting Ephesus. The duty assigned him was afterwards declared to be the work of an *evangelist*. 2 Tim. iv. 5. His appointment to Ephesus was temporary, being limited, at the farthest, to the time when Paul should come to him; but an earlier period of its termination was evidently left to his discretion, which he exercised by coming to Paul into Macedonia. Thus there was a disruption of the connexion, if any had been fixed; but none such was intended; the epistle was neither a commission, nor an ordination, but a *mere letter of instruction*, directing him in the

discharge of his high and important office of evangelist.

If Timothy returned to Ephesus from Rome, which is not recorded in the Scriptures, and died there, it will not establish that he ever exercised, or had any other office, than that of an evangelist.

## SECTION XXVI.

TITUS WAS ALSO AN EXTRAORDINARY OFFICER, AND NOT A BISHOP OF CRETE.

*He was Paul's attendant or evangelist, before the Gospel was carried to Crete. — Apollos is named in the epistle to Titus, but as they first saw Apollos on Paul's last visit to Ephesus, it was written after that visit. — Every movement of Paul, from the riot at Ephesus unto his first imprisonment, is given, and events show he did not leave him in Crete before he went to Rome. — His letters from Rome discover that Titus was not with him during his first imprisonment, and of course he could not have left him in Crete on his return from Rome. — Titus had been with Paul at Jerusalem, but after separating from Barnabas, he was no more with Paul till his second visit to Ephesus; probably he was sent with the letter to the Galatians, and met Paul at Ephesus on his last visit there, from whence Paul sent him to Corinth, and he came to Paul in Macedonia, and was sent back to Corinth. — At some period after his first imprisonment, they may have gone to Crete; and Titus being left there, received this letter as a discharge from thence, when a substitute arrived. — He was at Nicopolis one winter with Paul; and the Scriptures leave him in Dalmatia.*

WHEN Paul and Titus first went to Crete, before any church had been planted on the island, Titus must have been an attendant upon Paul, and a preacher, without any relation unto, or connexion with, the Cretans. Some have been of opinion, that Paul, after his liberation, sailed from Rome into Asia, and taking Crete in his way, left Titus there. But it does not appear, that Titus went to Rome with Paul, when he was carried a prisoner to be tried by Cæsar. Nor do any of the letters written from Rome, during that imprisonment, to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, or Philemon, mention Titus, or even imply that he was at Rome. On the contrary, his presence with

Paul is excluded by Colossians iv. 11, "These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me;" and Titus is not named as one of them.

That Paul purposed to visit Colosse, soon after his liberation, appears from his letter to Philemon, ver. 22. But the bespeaking of lodgings there would have been premature, if it had been intended consequent upon the arduous labors of planting churches in Crete. The epistle to Philemon preceded the letter to the Hebrews; in that, Timothy was joined; in this, he is mentioned as absent; "with whom if he come shortly," xiii. 23, Paul promised to see those to whom the letter was sent. He had gone, probably, to Philippi, Phil. ii. 19. This purpose of visiting Judea was, therefore, after his direction to Philemon to procure him lodgings at Colosse. Accordingly, some have imagined, that Paul went, with Timothy and Titus, to Crete, where he left Titus, and proceeded to Judea, returned through Syria and Cilicia, tarried some time at Colosse, wrote from thence to Titus in Crete to meet him at Nicopolis, came to Ephesus, left Timothy there, and proceeded to Macedonia. But neither does Titus appear to have been with Paul at Rome, during his imprisonment, nor is there the least evidence that such a journey was ever undertaken or accomplished. It was the opinion of Pool, that Paul left Titus in Crete, when he touched there a prisoner, on his passage to Rome. But as Titus is not named in the enumeration of either of the companies who left Macedonia for Jerusalem; nor mentioned in the history of their going to, remaining at, or coming from Jerusalem; nor spoken of in the account of the voyage, two years afterwards accomplished from Cæsaria to Rome, this opinion seems unfounded. It does not even appear, that Paul landed at Crete on that voyage.

Many have thought Paul, at or prior to the period of his separation from Barnabas, sailed with Silas and Titus from Cilicia to Crete, and returning to the



Asiatic continent, left Titus to perfect the settlement of the churches. But there is no hint of such a thing in the Acts or any of the Epistles. Yet the native language of Titus was that of the inhabitants of Crete. Also, Titus, who was in years and office older than Timothy, and commanded more respect, must have been as competent for that service, as he was to settle the differences in the Corinthian church, or to preach the gospel among the rude inhabitants of Dalmatia. But conjectures are as unprofitable, as endless. Paul took Titus to Jerusalem with him and Barnabas, when the exoneration of Gentile converts was determined, Gal. ii. 1, and though a Gentile, he was not required to be circumcised, ver. 3. But we cannot collect from the Scriptures, that Titus was with Paul from the time of his separation from Barnabas, during all his travels through Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, his subsequent voyage to Jerusalem, and return through the Asiatic churches; nor until he came to Ephesus, when Apollos, from Corinth, met him at that place. But Titus was then at Ephesus, for Paul sent him thence with his first epistle to the Corinthians. He might have been previously sent with the epistle to the Galatians, and when Paul came to them, have gone down with the apostle and his company to Ephesus.

There is also great difficulty in ascertaining when the epistle to Titus was written. Some place it before the imprisonment of Paul, as Lightfoot, Lardner, and other learned critics. But though we will neither mark the precise time for Paul's going with Titus into Crete, nor the particular winter which they spent together at Nicopolis after the recall of Titus from that island; yet it appears to be correct to assign them, and the writing of the epistle to Titus, which was not from Nicopolis, Tit. iii. 12, to a period after the apostle's enlargement at Rome, and prior to his return.

From the direction, Tit. iii. 13, to bring Apollos, Paul was then acquainted with him, but he was not

prior to his second coming to Ephesus, (Acts xviii. 24—28. xix. 1. 1 Cor. xvi. 12.) It is certain, therefore, that the epistle to Titus was not written before that period. From the apostle's arrival at Ephesus until the termination of his first imprisonment,<sup>a</sup> there was no possibility of leaving Titus in Crete, Tit. i. 5, except he landed a prisoner there on his voyage to Rome, and had Titus then with him, neither of which appears.

<sup>a</sup> This portion of the apostle's labors, being usually misrepresented, may be understood by any who will open unto the following proofs:

From Ephesus, Paul, having sent Erastus and Timothy into Macedonia, Acts xix. 22; 1 Cor. iv. 17, xvi. 10, wished Apollos to return to Corinth, 1 Cor. xvi. 12, to settle the discord, 1 Cor. i. 10—12, but he refusing, Titus was sent with the first epistle to that church, 2 Cor. ii. 13, vii. 6—13. Paul remaining at Ephesus three years, Acts xx. 31, Timothy must have returned to him, 1 Cor. xvi. 11, where he left him, 1 Tim. i. 3, after the riot, Acts xx. 1, and went to Troas, expecting to meet Titus, 2 Cor. ii. 12. Although he found an "open door" there, *ibid.* 12, he went into Macedonia, *ibid.* 13, and whilst "going over those parts," Acts xx. 2, Titus came to him, 2 Cor. vii. 6, and Timothy also; for he is joined in the second epistle to the Corinthians, c. i. 1, with which Titus was sent back to Greece, 2 Cor. viii. 18. Then Paul, who had intended to have gone by Corinth into Macedonia, 2 Cor. i. 15, 23, went from Macedonia into Greece, and abode three months, Acts xx. 2, 3, and there wrote his letter to the Romans, Rom. xv. 25, 26. His design of going from Corinth to Judea, 2 Cor. i. 16; Rom. xv. 31, by Ephesus, 1 Tim. iii. 14, iv. 13, being prevented by the Jews, Acts xx. 3, he went through Macedonia to Troas, *ibid.* 4, 5, sailed past Ephesus, called at Miletus, Acts xx. 16, 17, and came to Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 17. There being apprehended, he was sent to Cæsarea, and remained two years in prison, till Festus came into office, Acts xxiv. 27, who sent him by sea to Italy, Acts xxvii. 1. The company touched at Crete, Acts xxvii. 8, but left it, *ibid.* 13, 21, were wrecked on Mileta, delayed three months, *ibid.* xxviii. 1, 11, and arrived at Rome, ver. 16, where Paul remained a prisoner in his house for two years, ver. 30. Here he wrote his epistle to the Philippians, Colosians, and Philemon, in which Timothy is joined. He also sent, at this time, his letter to the Ephesians by Tychicus, Timothy having probably gone to Philippi, Phil. ii. 19, is not named; but was expected, when he wrote to the Hebrews, Heb. xiii. 2, 3, a little before his enlargement. It is, therefore, also clear, that Paul had not written his letter to Titus prior to his discharge at Rome.

Titus was appointed to discharge an important duty, when Paul sent him to Corinth, with his first epistle to that church, to rectify the disorders of a congregation, which possessed high advantages for language, science, and polished manners, and in which no officers appear to have been appointed. He was successful, and met Paul in Macedonia, to communicate the particulars of the affairs at Corinth. Being sent to them with the second epistle, he was followed by the apostle in person. This confidential service, compared with the circumstance, that no such apology was written in behalf of Titus, as of Timothy, affords some ground to presume, that Paul had previous experience of the prudence and fidelity of Titus.

The epistle to Titus expressly limits his service in Crete to the arrival of a substitute, who was to be sent, Titus iii. 12; it can never, therefore, let us suppose it to have been written when it may, prove a permanent connexion between this evangelist and the churches of Crete.

As Titus was to ordain elders in every city, it may be inferred, there were none until constituted by him, this being one of the things *left undone*, τα λειποντα, Titus i. 5. To suppose there were, is also to conflict with his practice of first planting, and afterwards ordaining. But when this work had been performed, or progressed in by him for some time, he was to meet Paul at Nicopolis. Those whom he had ordained, and others, whom Artemas, or Tychicus, might afterwards commission as elders, continued, it may be fairly presumed, the succession of their ordinary office, as every where else.

If it could be proved, that Titus died in Crete, it would no more establish that he was bishop of Crete, than his death at Corinth or at Dalmatia, where the Scriptural record leaves him, (2 Tim. iv. 10,) would have evinced that he was bishop of either of those places.

The verb translated "appointed," (Titus i. 5,) is

never once used in the New Testament in the sense of, to ordain to an office; but was in this instance designed to refer Titus to the particular directions Paul had given him, when he left him in Crete. The apostle gave him no new commission; he was to exercise the office, which he already had, towards any people to whom he was sent.

The apostles received an extraordinary commission, which may be said to have virtually contained all the offices, which have been legitimately distinguished by the church since the day of Pentecost; and thus they were the predecessors of all other church officers. This high commission was necessarily limited to them, (2 Cor. i. 15. Gal. i. 12. 1 Cor. ix. 1.) And there is little more propriety in bringing the apostolic office down to a level with that of presbyters or bishops, or of elevating the latter to the grade of the former, than of supposing every governor an alderman, or every alderman a governor of a state, because commissioned by such.

Titus exercised an office evidently inferior to that of Paul, for he went and came, preached, planted churches, and ordained bishops according to the directions of the apostle. He attended upon his person, and did the work of an apostle, in subordination to him. So far as appears from the New Testament, his work was not fixed, or stationary, more than that of the apostle; but it as far exceeded that of a modern diocesan bishop, as this does that of a bishop in the days of the apostles.

The practice of Paul was to carry the gospel into strange places, collect worshiping assemblies; and afterwards to return and ordain elders of those who had some experience. Pursuing the same reasonable course, he first collected churches in Crete, left them worshiping assemblies, and having given instructions to Titus to ordain such as were fit to be officers in the churches, he left him to accomplish what the apostle would have done, had he tarried longer, and gone

through those congregations a second time. Thus the churches in Crete were furnished, as other places were, with presbyters, or bishops, who could afterwards continue a regular administration of ordinances, by commissioning others of the same order in succession.



## SECTION XXVII.

### THE FIXED STATE, AND ORDINARY OFFICERS OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCHES.

*Under the spiritual dispensation of the gospel, the extraordinary officers were the apostles, to confer gifts and teach by means of the inspiration of suggestion; the evangelists, to plant and water churches; prophets, with occasional inspiration to explain the Scriptures.—The gifts are described, 1 Cor. xii. 28; Rom. xii. 6—8; Ephes. iv. 11, 12.—Officers qualified to administer ordinances, succeeded the extraordinary gifts, and churches, which were Christian societies, were substituted for the synagogues.—But two orders or kinds were adopted—presbyters, who were called also pastors and bishops, to teach, ordain, administer baptism and the eucharist, and to govern, and deacons to serve.—Among the presbyters, a bench of which was at first in every church, and but one presbytery in a society or city, there was one who presided, denominated πρῶτος, angel, and by other names; yet the ordination was not different from that of the rest.—The first change was by a gradual transition into pastoral or parochial episcopacy, afterwards into diocesan.—This was established by the council of Nice, and at length produced papacy.*

To acquire just views of the government of the churches of the apostles' days, it is proper to abandon all ideas of later changes, and retain only that knowledge, which Jewish believers had, prior to the descent of the Spirit upon them on the day of Pentecost.

The Mosaic dispensation terminated with the rending of the vail of the temple, Christ having been a minister of the circumcision<sup>a</sup> to fulfil the law, the sacrifices of which were to be superseded by his own. The seventy disciples could not have been officers of the kingdom then to come; but, like those of the Baptist,

<sup>a</sup> Rom. xv. 8; vide Matt. xv. 24, xx. 28; Matt. x. 5. viii. 4, xxviii. 19.

than whom "the least in the kingdom of heaven" was greater, (Matt. xi. 11,) they were only Jews. The twelve received a commission, just before the ascension, to be executed after the descent of the Spirit. Prior to such inspiration, they had neither the wisdom nor power requisite. It is no impeachment of the verity of the record to say, that the appointment of Matthias to the apostleship was equally unauthorised, as the desire of a temporal kingdom, Acts i. 6, both of which facts have been recorded. On the day of Pentecost, Peter saw, with a clearness to which he had been a stranger, the design of the death and of the exaltation of Christ, the nature of his kingdom, and the importance of the gift of the Spirit; (chap. ii. 4, 23, 4, 34, 5.) The apostles were themselves baptized by the Holy Ghost, and afterwards, by virtue of their commission, initiated believers with water, ver. 38, into a society in which all things were common, chap. iv. 32. Yet belonging to the stock of Israel, they attended at the temple and the synagogues, (chap. v. 42, vi. 9,) but commemorated, on its own day, the resurrection of Christ, in private assemblies. (Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 20.) Their increase of numbers soon required the designation of seven men, of spiritual gifts, and wisdom, to serve tables. (Acts vi. 1—5.) Stephen exercised his gift of teaching, ver. 8, 10. Philip viii. 12. Ananias ix. 10, and other saints, when dispersed by persecution, also preached, (viii. 4,) and baptized, (ver. 16.) Saul, arrested, received the word of wisdom from Christ; his sight by the hands of Ananias, with initiation into the church by baptism, and an introduction to the apostles by Barnabas, a Levite of Cyprus. The restoration of Eneas and Tabitha, the visions of Cornelius and Peter, and the gift of tongues to the Gentiles at Cæsarea, were also suited to the dispensation of the Spirit. The enlargement of Peter, Paul, and Silas, and of all the apostles from prisons; the spiritual guidance of Philip, Peter, and especially of Paul in his travels; the gifts furnished by the hands of the apos-

bles to their fellow laborers, the evangelists, and the churches; the impulses of the prophets; the justness, consistency, and purity of the doctrines, which were free from all mixture of error, and by immediate suggestion to the apostle, with their testimony, lives, and deaths; the judgments which fell on Ananias and Saphira, and Elymas, and other things; also, the power, influence, and opposition of the Pagan establishment; the learning, eloquence, and pride of the philosophers; the jealousy and hatred of the Pharisees and Sadducees, contrasted with the imbecility of the apostles, evince the fact and the necessity of a supernatural dispensation of the gospel.<sup>b</sup>

The prophets who came from Jerusalem, (Acts xi. 27,) whose inspiration was occasional, and those mentioned chap. xiii. 1, appear to have been inferior only to the apostles. (Eph. iii. 5.) By some of these the Holy Spirit directed Barnabas and Saul to be separated, not ordained, for they were inspired teachers, to preach the gospel in distant places; the former being a suitable companion for the apostle, in the island of his nativity. They went as Jews to the synagogues and families of their own nation, but in the power of the Spirit; whilst a different religion might have exposed them to persecution, and to the effects of that discrimination which Gallio humanely refused to recognize.

By the same Spirit the apostles were able to vindicate their own authority, and competent to vouch for those whom they took to their aid, in promulgating the gospel, and establishing societies. (2 Cor. viii. 23.) In the accomplishment of this work, ordination was no more required, than in the preaching of John and his disciples, or of the seventy sent forth by Christ; or in the case of him who cast out devils with the

<sup>b</sup> Vide Acts i. 8, ii. 33, viii. 15, 29, x. 19, 44, xi. 12, 15, xiii. 2, xv. 8, xvi. 6, xx. 28; 1 Thess. i. 5; Gal. iii. 3—5; 2 Cor. iii. 6—9; Heb. ii. 4.

master's approbation; or of Apollos, both before and after he became a Christian; no law of the former dispensation, nor custom in Israel, being against their preaching. A renunciation of their ancient customs might have offended the Jews to whom they came, and forfeited the national right of toleration.

When attending on the seventh-day worship, they prophesied and taught in the synagogues; on the Lord's day, they cultivated spiritual knowledge, commemorated his resurrection, and by degrees overcoming their Jewish prejudices, they prepared for that separation, which the destruction of Jerusalem was soon to consummate.

As ordination was neither required nor expedient in planting the churches, so it is not affirmed of an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, or a teacher, but all referred to gifts; unless Timothy be an exception; and in making him such we have hesitated; for why and when the hands of the presbytery were laid on him; and whether Paul joined, the relations being in different epistles, and without reference to each other, do not discover. He may have been chosen and ordained a presbyter, and afterwards circumcised and gifted by Paul as a helping evangelist. Apollos preached as a Jew without ordination at Alexandria and Ephesus; and as a Christian at Corinth, before he had seen either an apostle, an evangelist, or a presbyter. The laying of hands on Paul and Barnabas, was after the apostleship of the former; not like the imposition by Peter and John, (Acts viii. 17.) for the conferring spiritual gifts as apostles, not after the manner of Paul, who imposed his hands on Timothy as an apostle. The attempts to locate Timothy and Titus, have been shown destitute of a support; so long as the residence of an apostle, or evangelist, at any place, became expedient, his authority was still general and extraordinary. As no preacher of the gospel can be shown to have been ordained by imposition of hands, except as a presbyter, and unto a particular



church, the contrary we have no right to assume against fact, utility, and Jewish examples. The three celebrated texts must now be tested.

Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians before his second visit; that church being left, as all others were, in the first instance, without officers. They partook of the supper as other churches on every Lord's day, after the manner of a passover. That they had received spiritual gifts, appears; (chap. xii. 8.) They had seen an apostle in Paul, a prophet in Silvanus, a number of evangelists, and witnessed various gifts, as healing, and tongues: but however desirable the gifts, the apostle declared to them "a more excellent way;" for sanctifying influences change the soul, and prepare for heaven.

The terms evangelist, presbyter, pastor, bishop, and deacon, in their official sense, never occurred in this epistle. With respect to the terms, *helps*, ἀντιληψεις, <sup>c</sup> and *governments*, κυβερνησεις, they are not elsewhere found in the New Testament. Being abstract, and placed among extraordinary "gifts," expressly so denominated in verse 31, they could have signified nothing else to a people to whom had been dispensed only spiritual things.<sup>d</sup> Nor does evidence exist, that any officer of a Christian church was ever called by either of those names. That interpretation which makes *helps*, deacons, and *governments*, lay-elders, is not only conjectural and gratuitous, but preposterous; for it places the order of deacons before that of presbyters.

Those "strangers" from Rome at the feast of Pentecost, who received the Holy Spirit, it may be presumed, carried home the gospel to the metropolis; and the opposition they experienced from their bre-

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 28.—Πρωτον αποστολους, δευτερον προφητας, τριτον διδασκαλους, επειτα δυναμεις, εις χαρισματα ιαματων, αντιληψεις, γενη γλωσσαν.

<sup>d</sup> Τα πραγματα εικονομειν πνευματικα. Chrysostom in loc.



thren, procured the exile of all the Jews from Italy. <sup>e</sup> When, by the death of Claudius, their banishment ceased, Paul addressed them from Corinth. Urbanus, like Titus, was a *fellow-laborer*, συνεργός.

But of presbyters or deacons at Rome, or of the visit of any one who might ordain them, there is not a word at the period of the epistle. But they appear not only to have partaken of the extraordinary *gifts*, χαρισματα, which, during their banishment, they had witnessed in the churches planted by the apostles, but to have been in danger of vanity in the exercise of them, (Rom. xii. 3.) On which account, they were advised to consider themselves as members of the same body, the church; as necessary to each other; and possessing gifts for the common good. These are distinguished into two kinds, *prophecy* and *ministry*, προφητειαν and διακονιαν.<sup>f</sup> Their attendance on the Sabbaths in the synagogues; and on the Lord's days, in at least four private houses, is unquestionable. In the synagogues, as Jews, they might all prophesy, yielding precedence to priests and Levites, and exercise their spiritual *gift*, προφητεια, by rightly expounding some portion of the Old Testament to the synagogue worshipers. The caution given by the apostle, (Rom. xii. 6,) was in this to go nothing beyond their *measure*, or contrary to the *scheme* of the gospel. When assembled as Christians alone, they had to accomplish a *service*, διακονιαν, in the discharge of which, any of them, for they had no officers, might exercise his χαρισμα. As in the synagogues, *prophecy*, προφητεια, a sudden suggestion of truth to the mind by the Spirit, must have been that gift, which was most suited to awaken

<sup>e</sup> Sueton. Claud. c. 25.

<sup>f</sup> Rom. xii. 6—8. Εχόντες δε χαρισματα—ειτε προφητειαν, και την αναλογιαν της πιστεως· ειτε διακονιαν, εν τη διακονια· ειτε ο διδασκων, εν τη διδασκαλια· ειτε ο παρακαλων εν τη παρακλησει· ο μεγαδιδους, εν απλοτητι· ο προσλαμενος εν σπουδη· ο ελεων, εν ιλαροτητι. In 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, χαρισματα are distinguished from διακονιαι, as *gifts* from their *application*.

and instruct the Jews; so the *ministry*, *διακονια*, was in its various branches more properly their Christian duty, when convened in their own evangelical worship. In the *διακονια*, in ver. 7, 8, five species of gifts were exhibited, not in the abstract, but by five participles. We have neither any warrant from the grammar of the language, to refer a part of the specification to prophecy;<sup>g</sup> nor from the circumstances of the case, to suppose that the writer intended an anticipation of the two ordinary offices, which they were afterwards to receive, in common with all the fixed churches, for no such description could be necessary to those who were acquainted with the government of the synagogues. The same diversity of gifts existed at Corinth, whence he was writing; except that wherever there was an apostle, there was also the *word of wisdom*, and power of conferring. There all might, for they had no officers, prophesy, and employ their extraordinary gifts, if without confusion. (1 Cor. xiv. 3, 5, 31, 39.)

Theophylact understood *προισταμενος* in the sense of *προσταλις*, a *succourer*, (Rom. xvi. 2,) and explains it by *βοηθων*. Thus the sense would be, let him that *gives his substance*, *μεταδιδους*, do it with simplicity of heart, or liberality, and he that *succours*, *προισταμενος*, the distressed, do it with diligence. This judgment being by one whose native language was the Greek, deserves high regard; but other Greek writers, for the most part, understood by *προισταμενος*, either *presiding*, as the *primus presbyter*, or *acting as patrons to strangers*; but in

<sup>g</sup> Προφητεια is distinguished from διδαχη, in 1 Cor. xiv. 6, compared with the miraculous gift of faith, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, and was to be abolished as well as the gift of tongues, *ibid.* ver. 8. Also, προφηται are enumerated in Ephesians, iv. 11, before evangelists, then follow διδασκαλοι. To arrange, therefore, διδασκων under προφητεια, in Rom. xii. 6, 7, is also to confound Scriptural distinctions. But διακονια is of extent sufficient to include the five species of ministry which follow it; vide 1 Cor. xii. 5; Rom. xi. 13; Col. iv. 17; Acts vi. 1—4; 1 Cor. iii. 5. And to it does the specification naturally belong.

the sense of an inferior presbyter, we have found no example in any commentator prior to the Reformation.

When the epistle to the Ephesians was written, they had presbyters, or bishops, and probably deacons. To them, therefore, he could write, both of the extraordinary gifts, and the fixed officers.

Having exhorted the Ephesian Christians to peace, and spoken of the church as one body, (chap. iv. 3, 4,) and of each member as a partaker of the grace particularly given to him, (ver. 7,) he alleges, that Christ had ascended to heaven, that he might confer all the gifts that should be necessary to the promulgation of the gospel, and the planting of the churches, (ver. 8, 10.) *He gave, gifts, not ordinations, some to be apostles, some to be prophets, and some to be pastors and teachers,* (ver. 11.<sup>h</sup>) All of these were conferred for the preparing of the saints unto the ministry, unto the building of the church; (ver. 12.) The extraordinary gifts necessary to planting the church are here first expressed, and the design of them was, *προς τον καθαρισμον, to prepare saints,* not merely for preaching, but for the duties of the fixed state, *εις εργον διακονιας,* an expression which well includes both of the ordinary offices; and lest his meaning, with regard to the design of these preparatory gifts, should be mistaken, he adds, *εις οικοδομην του σωματος του Χριστου*<sup>i</sup> and to express that the settled state of the church, when gifts might cease,

<sup>h</sup> Ephes. iv. 11, 12. *Και αυτος εδωκε, τους μεν, αποστολους, τουςδε, προφητας, τους δε, ευαγγελιστας, τουςδε, ποιμενας και διδασκαλους, προς τον καθαρισμον των αγιων, εις εργον διακονιας, εις οικοδομην του σωματος του Χριστου.*

<sup>i</sup> Ver. 12 has been deemed exegitical of *διδασκοιους* only, and expressive merely of the preparation of holy men for the gospel ministry. But this is to mistake the usual discrimination of these distinct gifts, vide Acts xiii. 1; 1 Cor xii. 28, and to destroy the argument of the apostle, who, in ver. 12, shows the design of the gifts of the Spirit to have been to plant a church, of which he wishes the Ephesians to be found peaceful members.

had not then arrived, he subjoins, (ver. 13,) *μεχρι κατα-  
λησωμεν, &c.*<sup>k</sup>

Apostles were inspired in all things necessary, having the word of *wisdom*. Prophets had also an extraordinary gift, being guided to interpret the word of God truly; this is the word of *knowledge*. Evangelists were equally extraordinary teachers, having *faith* in what they heard, and aided the apostles in preaching and planting churches. The labors of these were temporary and general; their inspiration was not suggestion, but superintendence.

The term "*pastors*," which is not used in the letters to the Corinthians and Romans, is correlative, and supposes a flock; but not necessarily an official connexion, nor a flock to every shepherd, for in Acts xx. 28, Paul had charged the presbyters of the Ephesian church, when they met him at Miletus, *to take heed—to the flock in which the Holy Spirit placed them bishops, to feed the church, ποιμαίνειν την εκκλησιαν*. This charge to the elders of Ephesus plainly identifies the duties implied in the words *pastor* and *bishop*, although the first is not expressed. In like manner, he avoids in this epistle, as if with design, the names *presbyter* and *bishop*, although he certainly knew this class of officers existed in that church.

Before the ordination of *fixed officers*, there must have been numbers who acted as *pastors*, who, like the apostles and the rest, were not the ordinary officers with whom particular churches were afterwards furnished, but to *prepare* the way for them, *προς καταρτισμον*. The appointment of church officers, *εις εργον διακονιας*, furnished no argument for the truth of the cause, to be compared with the extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit in the promulgation and planting of the gospel by the irresistible gifts of Christ.

The history of facts evinces, that the extraordinary state of the church and the work of the Spirit, for

<sup>k</sup> Vide Hoogeveen, p. 97.

whom the apostles waited at Jerusalem, and by whom they were endued with *power* from on high, according to promise, (Luke xxiv. 49,) were intended to gather converts and plant churches; during which dispensation of the Spirit, the apostles needed no other authority or voucher either for themselves or their assistants.<sup>1</sup> But it was important that the churches should be provided with officers publicly designated, and with distinguishing ordinances, for their future government and continuation, when the extraordinary gifts should cease. They were, accordingly, for this cause, every where in due time, furnished with officers from whom, in succession, the church will continue till the end of the world. This fixed state of the churches is that which demands our next, chief, and final attention.

Every one discerns that baptism and the supper were in names, modes, administrations, and subjects, conformed to ancient rites. The gradual substitution of the Christian synagogue, (Jam. ii. 2,) for the Jewish, among those who still retained attachments for the old order of things, as well as for meats and days, produced a similarity of worship and officers.

But modern synagogues greatly differ from those of the first century.<sup>m</sup> In the synagogues, priests and

<sup>1</sup> The opinion of the modern Greek church, that Paul was ordained by Ananias, is contrary to the instructions given unto, and professed by him. Saul's sight was to be restored, and he was to be received by baptism. The idea of Selden, that he was ordained as a scribe in the synagogue, and that he bore the same rank when a Christian, is possible, so far as regarded the Jews, but not necessary. The separation of Saul with Barnabas, who had brought him from his proper work, when the Spirit, who seems to have guided all his apostolic movements, sent him back to his duty, was too late for an ordination, had any been proper. Paul, who best knew, rested his commission as an apostle on the words of Christ; and the Spirit given by his hands was the distinguishing proof of his apostleship. Gal. i. 12; 2 Cor. xii. 12; Acts xix. 6, viii. 15.

<sup>m</sup> Vitringa ("De Synagoga") has enumerated some striking differences in lib. ii. c. 4. He has also shown from the Jerusalem



levites had precedence, but as the worship was moral, not ceremonial, they might serve without the dress necessary in the temple, and no Israelite was excluded from any of the offices, of what tribe soever, or from reading in the synagogue, without bearing an office. Thus it was the custom, εἰωθος, both of Christ and Paul to officiate in the synagogue; (Luke iv. 16, Acts xvii. 1—7;) and no where in the New Testament are presbyters called priests, or deacons levites; on the contrary, Christ alone is the priest, and all the officers of the Christian church are to him deacons, that is, ministers or servants.

No denomination of Christians is now perfectly conformed in officers, government, and worship, to the churches which were planted by the apostles and evangelists, nor is it important that they should be.

That presbyters and deacons, the former to oversee and teach, the latter to aid them in the eucharist and the temporal concerns of the society, are useful in every church, are matters of fact. That among the presbyters, *a first among equals*, primus inter pares, an angel, president, or bishop existed, of the same ordination and order, whose power advanced afterwards from a single church to cities, provinces, kingdoms, and the Christian world, has been shown in detail.

Caution must be exercised, not to confound names of officers with the appellative senses of words. Peter and John denominate themselves πρεσβυτεροι, *elders*, in allusion to their age; for apostles are distinguished from elders, (Acts xv. 6.) Private men were ἀποστολοι, *messengers*, of a particular church, (2 Cor. iii. 23,) not apostles of Christ, (Gal. i. 12, ii. 8.) The apostles were

Talmud, the Gemara, and other Jewish writings, that in the ancient synagogues the רב and פּרנסי were of the same order, and were called זקנים, *elders*, whilst the חננים were δαυταροι, *deacons*. In exact correspondence we find the ordinary officers, originally fixed in the respective churches, to have been the προεστωις, and other ἀποστολοι, or πρεσβυτεροι, all of the same order; and the δαυταροι, subordinate.

διακονοι, (1 Cor. iii. 5,) *servants* of Christ, not the deacons of particular societies. The first fixed officers of the churches who were generally seniors in age or grace, were designated by the name *elders*, πρεσβυτεροι, that is, זקני,<sup>n</sup>; but were not always old men. By virtue of their commission, they were overseers, επισκοποι, *bishops*, in particular churches.<sup>o</sup> They were appointed to feed and rule the flock, but are named in no instance as ordained officers, ποιμενες, *pastors*.<sup>p</sup> The presbyter who presided in the worship and government of each church, was the προεδρος, president, or ruling presbyter.<sup>q</sup> But the president was at the same time one of the elders, or bishops of the same church, by virtue of the same ordination, and had no other, till he became the bishop of the *Cyprianic* age.

If there were two kinds of elders, there were also two kinds of bishops; because elders and bishops were the same officers.<sup>r</sup> When the duties were various, and the elders numerous, prudence must have assigned to presbyters respectively different employments. A number of them in the same church, was, in the early days important, not only because of persecution, but for the arduous work of instructing the Gentiles, both in public and private. Had one presbyter only been fixed in each, their continuance by succession would have been obviously too precarious.

<sup>n</sup> Acts xiv. 23, xx. 17; Titus i. 5; James v. 14; 1 Tim. iv. 4; 1 Peter v. 1.

<sup>o</sup> Acts xx. 28; Titus i. 5—7; James v. 14; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 2; 1 Pet. v. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Acts xx. 28, επισκοπους ποιμαίνειν, 1 Pet. v. 2, ποιμανατε—επισκοπουσιν for פרושים of the synagogue, is from פרום, *pascere* or *gubernare*, and is equivalent to επισκοποι. The Hebrew idiom is by both apostles here carried into the Greek.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17, the προεδρος of the πρεσβυτεριον answered unto the רב of the פרושים. He was probably the angel in each of the apocalyptic churches.

<sup>r</sup> That elder and bishop, πρεσβυτερος and επισκοπος, designated the same officer, may be seen by comparing Acts xx. 17, with ver. 28; also Titus i. 5, with ver. 7; also 1 Peter v. 1, with ver. 2, in the Greek; the translation conceals it.

The duties of elders and deacons were not the same. Had there existed mute elders in the apostolic churches, deacons would have been unnecessary. Elders must "feed the church," (Acts xx. 28,) and should be "*apt to teach*;" but this was not expected of deacons.<sup>s</sup>

That there were but two orders of officers in the churches, may be shown by the addresses and letters to them. Thus Paul and Timothy, writing to the Philippians, address "all the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." (Phil. i. 1.) If elders inferior to bishops, had existed in that favorite church, it is unaccountable, that they should have been omitted, and the deacons named. The first letter to Timothy was framed evidently with such views. That evangelist received no directions about the ordination of ruling elders, his business was to select suitable persons, and to ordain them as bishops; and others, of different qualifications, as deacons. The same two orders, elders to preside and to preach the gospel, and deacons to help them in other duties, were to be ordained by Titus, but not two sorts of elders.

Peter, (1 Epist. v. 1—5,) addressing the presbyters of the dispersion, makes no distinction between them, but supposes them clothed with the same office and powers; and equally charges all and every one of them: "Feed the flock," ποιμανατε—ποιμνιον, *act as pastors to the flock* "of God, which is among you, taking the oversight," επισκοπουητες, *exercising the office of bishops*, "not by constraint, but willingly." Without exception, the *elders*, πρεσβυτεροι, were all bound to feed and

<sup>s</sup> Justin Martyr, Apol. 1, p. 127.—Διακονοι διδασκειν εκαστη των παροντων μεταλαβειν απο του ευχαριστηθηντος αβλυ, &c. This was within forty years of the apostle John. So in the Apostolical Constitutions, which are later, (c 13, p. 405,) it is said, "Ο δε διακονος κατεχεται ποληριον, και επιδιδους λεγειω, αιμα χριστου, ποληριον ζωης.

govern the flock, “ποιμανατε—ποιμνιον,” as *bishops*, “επισκοπουντες.”

Presbyters must have differed in their gifts, graces, and talents; some were best qualified for governing, others for exhorting and comforting, others for teaching the church; that each should exercise his particular powers, was the dictate of prudence.

But this diversity by no means affected the identity of the order, the mode of ordination, the nature of the office, or the obligation of its duties.

No where do we find, in the history of the Acts of the Apostles, any but the one order of presbyters. Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church, *πρεσβυτερους κατὰ ἐκκλησιαν*, (Acts xiv. 23,) without any distinction of kinds. There appears to have been but one class of them at Ephesus. Paul *sent for the elders of the church*, *μελεκαλεσατο τους πρεσβυτερους της εκκλησιας*. (Acts xx. 17.) They came to Miletus; if any of them had been *ruling elders*, in the modern sense of those terms, it is not discernible with what propriety he could have charged them, without discrimination, to take heed to the flock, in which the Holy Spirit had made them *bishops*, *επισκοπους*, and *ποιμαινειν*, *to act as shepherds to the church*.

The question, so far as regards *ruling elders*, freed from embarrassment, rests upon a single passage of Scripture. “Let the elders who rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine.”<sup>t</sup> These words express a diversity in the exercises of the presbyterial office, but not in the office itself. If it can be shown that there existed two kinds of officers, called by the common name, presbyters, this Scripture may be then understood to relate to them. But the text alone will never establish such distinction, because it can be literally understood of various duties of the same order. Pres-

<sup>t</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17. Οι καλως προεστατες πρεσβυτεροι διπλης τιμης αξιουσθιοςαν· μαλιστα οι κοπιωντες εν λογω και διδασκαλια.



byters advanced in life, grave in deportment, and of distinguished prudence, were fitted to preside; others, if of more ready utterance, and of competent knowledge, were best qualified to teach. The passage shows that some *presided*, that others *labored* in word, and that the honor, or rather *reward*, was to be proportioned to their efforts, not according to grades, and orders never mentioned in the Scriptures. Presbyter, as an officer of a church, means in every other passage in the New Testament, a bishop, in the ancient sense of the term, and there is no reason to infer from this text, a new sort, never heard of till the Reformation. If there be any priority, it is a precedence over the presbyters themselves; for the *προεστως* was he who *presided* amongst the Ephori, among whom was parity; or who governed a kingdom, and accordingly Chrysostom thought him both, *ποιμην* and *διδασκαλος*, a *pastor* and *teacher*. So far is the word *ruling*, *προεστωτες*, from signifying a subordinate class of presbyters, that Justin Martyr, within half a century of John,<sup>u</sup> makes use of that identical word repeatedly, to mark out that presbyter, who gave thanks and dispensed the elements at the sacramental supper to the deacons, to be carried to the communicants. The presbyters, who presided, *προεστωτες*, on the most solemn occasions, blessing the elements, deserved double reward; but *especially those*, *μαλιστα οι*, who performed the chief labor in preaching. "All the saints salute you *μαλιστα δε οι*, but *chiefly they* that are of Cæsar's household." (Phil. iv. 22.) Who would imagine that the saints of Cæsar's household, were of a different kind from others? Their labors might be different, but they were equally saints; *μαλιστα* only *expresses* that their salutations were either *more earnest*, or presented to *peculiar* notice.

If a single proof of the existence of a distinct order

<sup>u</sup> Apol. i. p. 127. Ευχαριστησαντος δε του προεστωτος, &c. Page 131.—Ο προεστως δια λογου την νουθεσιαν—αρτος πισφερειαι και οιγος και υδαρ.



of ruling elders can be shown from the Scriptures, it is sufficient. But they show, that two orders only were constituted by the apostles, presbyters or bishops, and deacons.

The form of government at present used in the Presbyterian church has retained the alternative; the churches have their election of two, or of three orders, and thus give to neither side just ground of offence. In it we cheerfully acquiesce. These outlines of the reasons upon which three orders have been refused, in, we believe, a majority of our churches, have been reluctantly given; but the confident style of several recent publications, of opposite sentiments, has rendered the defence of our own opinion, and that of our fathers, a duty. The question is extremely simple. Did such a distinct intermediate order exist in the apostolic churches? Until it be shown, either by fact or Scripture, we may safely adopt the negative, both as to the lay presbyter, and the diocesan bishop. But we have found nothing for either, except hearsays, opinions, and some forged writings.

The presbyter in each society, with a president at its head, passed into the pastoral form, or parochial episcopacy, by degrees scarcely perceptible. The ulterior transition into diocesan episcopacy, followed, as the necessary result of the restriction of each city to one set of church officers; and so long as promotion was exposure to persecution, power accumulated without jealousy.

Afterwards when Constantine substituted the Christian for the Pagan hierarchy, of which he was, by virtue of his office, the pontifex maximus, the church did not so much acquiesce in the change, as exult at the establishment of Christianity. The western portion advanced by slow, but certain, steps unto papal domination. It was not till the Reformation, that the ground-work was laid of those various forms of church government, which at present appear among

protestants. They were deemed then to be, as they really are, of minor importance; and, in fact, received their characteristic features, less from the diversity of the hypotheses of the reformers in different countries, than from the political circumstances of the respective nations. They awaken research, without dividing the faithful; and what right views can obscure, perfection will eventually obliterate.

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**“LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.”**

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THE following numbers were first published in the "Philadelphian," of the year 1828, as answers to some remarks under the same title, which appeared in the "Church Register."

## LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

### NUMBER I.

THIS title is taken from the Church Register. It, at the same time, points to the cause, and expresses the subject of our inquiries. The alternative being tendered, "Prayer may be called the making known of our wants to a superior being, and our desire to be relieved from them; or, it is "the offering the heart to God;" we accept the latter, because neither angels nor glorified saints can help us, or become mediators. To the objection, that "the Omniscient knows *our wants* long before they existed," the anonymous writer answers in terms suited to his own creed. We prefer to say the author of all good governs with equal particularity in the kingdoms of providence and grace: in both he adopts means, among which are often the duties assigned to moral agents. Their liberty, being essential to their responsibility, is secure; whilst their voluntary actions are constituents of the general scheme of events. If the prayer of faith be thus a mean to ensure a promised blessing, the grace is certain, and consequently the duty; and the purpose, the fore-knowledge, and the event are equally sure, whilst the duty of praying is not the less incumbent; and as in every other case, absolute contingency is wholly excluded.

When he says that "private prayer, is that pouring out of the heart, which holds the soul in rapt communion with spiritual things;" and afterwards that "this (*order*) is best effected in public prayer by the use



and adoption of one general form; we feel no other concern, than that the writer would carry his private devotion to the public sanctuary. But when we observed, by the second number, that the aim of the writer was to show that, "the Jews used precomposed and set forms of prayer in their public religious worship;" and that such was "the practice of our blessed Redeemer, and after him, of his disciples;" the two numbers were seen to be perfectly in character for their vehicle, and illy suited to a hemisphere, where liturgies are not rejected by dissenters, but by the mass of the people.

Prayer being the offering up of the desires to God, it is accomplished with or without words; in words which are our own, or another's; or printed or written. There ought, therefore, to be "no degradation, no want of piety, no proof of alienship," imputed to any individual, or denomination, for using "prayers precomposed," nor have we heard of any such thing; but if the ancient Jews and the first Christians used a public liturgy, it would seem that we, who have none, must be the aliens. We have therefore a conceded excuse for parrying this charge by examining its supports.

The first is taken from Exodus xv. the song of Moses and the children of Israel by the Red Sea; "the words and tune of *which* were arranged and known before all the people joined in it; and therefore it is a set form." This would have been in point, had the question been of singing Psalms. It would also have been relevant, if the lawfulness of set forms in prayer had been denied. But in proof of the use of "precomposed and set forms of prayer in public worship" of the Jews, its bearing is not easily discerned.

Also that the words were previously "known by them all" we are unable to infer from the circumstances. Printing had not been invented—the song consists of nineteen verses, and the thousands of Israel

were numerous. We read that "Miriam answered them;" and her answer, so far as given, was the first sentence which Moses sang. It is possible, therefore, and seems to us probable, that those who knew the inspired words, sang by sentences, and others responded. The argument from a particular and extraordinary occasion to a universal practice is inconclusive; as much so as if it should be asserted, that Presbyterians follow in their worship a liturgy, because they sing the psalms of David.

The second proof is brought from Deuteronomy, xxi. 7-8. The answer to be taken of the elders of a city next unto the place of a homicide, where the murderer is not found. "Our hands have not shed this blood, neither did our eyes see *it*. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people of Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge." "This is a prayer,"—"given as a form,"—"a precomposed prayer." So is every oath, "so help me God." This was an oath of purgation, which was appointed by law to be taken by the elders of a city, under such circumstances, to clear themselves of the murder. But it was "precomposed by God" himself. Yes, the theocracy was his, and he created the law. But it constituted no part of a liturgy, and can prove none. And if it were, it would only justify a prayer book of divine inspiration, but such never had existence.

The next argument is drawn from the benediction, Num. vi. 24, 25, 26, given to Aaron and the priests to be officially "put—upon the children of Israel." "That it is a form cannot be questioned." It is a form of a benediction, and was in force under the Jewish dispensation. It is neither obligatory now, nor is it evidence of the existence of a Jewish liturgy, but affords a presumption of the contrary.

"The song of Deborah and Barak, Judges v. affords another evidence in favour of the use of set forms on

public occasions, in the earliest period of the Jewish church." But this was on a *special* occasion, and proves not a general practice; and if it did, it extends to psalms, not to a liturgy. But the book of psalms, made long afterwards with few exceptions, evinces that such a composition had not been previously given them. Also a *song* given by *inspiration* to the *Jews* will not justify a palming an *uninspired prayer book* upon the *church of Christ*. In singing it is scarcely possible, that the duty should be accomplished without the use of precomposed forms; but for prayer no such necessity existed; thus when "Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God; all the people answered amen, amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." If their hands were up, and their heads bowed, and their faces were to the ground, they must have uttered amen, amen, without prayer books.

Still further, this writer thinks set forms of prayer receive a "testimony" from David's appointing "the Levites to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even." This language leads the reader only to the idea of singing praises. But had it expressed, with equal clearness, prayer, there is nothing upon which to found an opinion, that any prayers were written. We have never found a "testimony" of any other prayers offered at the temple, except on an extraordinary occasion, than those which each man offered alone. We have authority enough, that the law was read, and that the levites "gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading" without recurring to Josephus. He was a Pharisee, and not more credible than the traditions collected in the Talmud, against which we have the caution of Christ himself. If this writer will look into the Hebrew prayers now used in the synagogues, he will find prayers for the dead, and other proofs in abundance that they are of modern date.

There follows a sentence, in language inferential, but in sentiment unjustly caustic. "All which proves that they, although in their religious polity guided by God himself, left neither the manner, the subject, nor the words of their public service to the wild and varied imaginations of their priests,—though separated by divine appointment for God's worship; neither to the practice or observance of private judgment, and individual opinion." *They, the Jews, left neither, &c.?* Did they prescribe to the priests? Where is the proof? If by *public service* be meant the duties of the priests' office, these were not prescribed by the people, but in the ceremonial law, which neither contains, nor requires the reading of, public prayers. If "*their*" imply other priests, we answer there is no priest under the gospel, but Christ himself. If "wild and varied imaginations" be a stroke aimed at extempore public prayers, it is premature, for it has not been yet shown that God has required set forms. The concessions that prayer is "the offering the heart to God," and that it may be without written expressions when in private, warrant the conclusion that forms are presented to please men, not God. "Wild and varied imaginations," appears to be a designed imputation upon us, who use no forms, and were its source not an individual, would justify recrimination. We have not forgotten the objections which our forefathers made to the prayer book, and feel prepared to vindicate at all times their justice. If "private judgment and individual opinion" must be taken away from our prayers, how are they "the offering the heart to God?" And if this be absent, words are not prayers. But we are responsible to God only, and fallible man has no right to restrain the prayers of his fellow men.

What this writer shall yet effect, remains to be seen, but in the Old Testament he has not found a solitary proof, that in the ordinary worship of the ancient Jews, they offered joint prayers. They had their hours of



prayer, and made many and long prayers, differing in "the manner, subjects and words," for whilst one drew near and thanked God, that he was not as a publican then in his view, the publican stood at a distance, and could only say, Lord be merciful to me a sinner. But neither the pharisee, nor publican brought a written form, or opened a book; nor do we find a priest, either in parable or fact, at any time to have interfered with the prayers of the people.

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## NUMBER II.

PRAYER is a personal duty, which one man cannot discharge for another. Those who claim superior knowledge, should pray for us, but not prescribe our prayers. If inspiration has left us to the expression of our own desires, uninspired men may not restrict us to the adoption of theirs. God demands our hearts, and not the reading of forms; which may be lawful for him who thinks them such, but not to him who doubts their propriety. As in joint prayer, by the mental adoption of so much as we approve, we make it our own; so in written forms, that only is our prayer, which the heart offers up to God. That by forms the weak may be led and profited, is freely conceded; also, that he who leads in the public duty, may provide a form, is allowable, though rarely advisable; but that any should presume to alter the public worship which God has appointed, by the introduction of a system of prayers, which he has neither made nor authorized, is, to say the least, of extremely doubtful propriety. That we question the testimony, or disregard the authority of the Scriptures, except when they favor our preconceived ideas, is a charge



which does no honor to the anonymous writer in the Church Register, and we hope destitute of support. In the temple service, there were men appointed to sing, and their psalms were necessarily preconceived; but that the prayers, except mere benedictions, were such, should be proved. We know only that each prayed by himself; except in extraordinary cases, when the prayers were new, and suited to the occasion: such were those of Solomon, Asa, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, and Ezra.<sup>a</sup> If they accommodated their prayers to their wants, why should not we? If in their darker dispensation they had no liturgy, in the modern limited sense of that word, why should we, under the light of the gospel, be restricted from expressing the desires of our hearts?

That the Saviour worshipped in the synagogue and attended in the temple, and fulfilled all righteousness, as a "minister of the circumcision," unto his death, is certain. But that therein he found and used a liturgy, is begging the question. If Dr. Lightfoot could have restored it, we should have rejoiced to use it, so far as the change of dispensations would allow, and would not consent to exchange it, for all the uninspired ones that have been since contrived. But that there was no such thing, can be made as clear as a negative will admit.

He gave a form to his disciples at their request, as John had done to his. This was suited to the Jewish worship, in praying for the coming of the "kingdom," which, according to Daniel, "the God of heaven would set up," and in asking "*nothing in the name*" of Christ; but was never used by the apostles, or first Christians in public, so far as known to us. It was soon, nevertheless, adopted for baptized persons, and refused to catechumens. We modify its meaning, and prize it, making it our pattern, and, in some instances,

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings viii. 22; 2 Chron. xiv. 11, xx. 5; Isaiah xxxvii. 15, 16; Ezra ix. 5, 6, 7.

adopting its words as a form. But we cannot affirm with this writer—" *When ye pray, ye shall say,* was his preface and command, by which we are to understand, that on all occasions of prayer, whatever else is used, this must not be omitted." We think this was the preface, or introduction, of Christ's answer to the request of his disciples, but not the preface of the prayer itself, otherwise it must still be offered up with the prayer. The preface, or introduction, of the prayer, seems to us to be, "Our father who art in heaven." Nor do we view it as a command, for then no other prayer could be offered. Also, this writer makes the Saviour to assert in general, what he spoke under peculiar circumstances. "Lord teach *us* to pray, as John also taught *his disciples*. And he said unto *them*, when *ye* pray, say," &c. (Luke xi. 1, 2.) "Teach us to pray," was equivalent unto, Give us a pattern of prayer. This meaning is the same as when he said, (Mat. vi. 9,) "after this manner pray ye." The plural was used in the prayer, because the answer given by the Saviour, and his address on the other occasion, were in each instance, to more than to one person.

The Lord's prayer "is a sanction for set forms, in the public service of God, practised as it was by the Jews, the Saviour, and his apostles, which rebuts all reasoning." That a single prayer made under the Mosaic dispensation, and suited to it, given to individuals without any reference to public worship, and before any authority had issued for preaching the gospel, should be a *sanction* for a public liturgy in the church of Christ, is a position which "rebuts," that is, *drives back*, "all reasoning." In Matthew vi. the Saviour directs to the closet, and when the door is shut, to pray in secret, rather than ostentatiously, as the Pharisees, to make prayers in public, which being *to be seen*, were long and individual, not joint. When afterwards his disciples asked for a pattern, and he gave the same to them, there was not a word to show,

that either they or he intended this for public worship. The writer having failed in showing, that the Jews had any public form, of course his inference, that the Saviour had used the same, is wholly without foundation; and his conclusion, that the apostles pursued a form, because their master did, is consequently a groundless supposition.

That joint worship is expressly required, and may also be argued from "oneness of profession, doctrine, and object," in other words, one faith, one hope, one baptism, one God, and Father of all, is freely and universally admitted; but union in prayer by no means requires, that there should be written forms; for where two or three determine to convene to pray *touching any thing*, though their object be the same, their petitions may be according to their respective views, or if one prayer be offered, in which the rest unite, it may be expected to be new, and suited to the occasion, not in language composed without reference to the particular case.

To "offend on one point is to be guilty of all," when an offence is committed with knowledge, because it is a denial of the authority of the lawgiver; but to conclude all in guilt, who conscientiously prefer to pray without the use of unauthorized forms, does indeed "rebut all reasoning." Neither the ancient Jews, nor Jesus Christ, nor his apostles have been, or can be shown, to have used a liturgy, or system of written prayers; nor were such public forms in use in the first Christian churches; when, therefore, we offer the desires of our hearts in the language which our minds suggest, we follow the example of Christ, his apostles and the primitive churches.

Of the lawfulness, or even expediency of using forms of prayer, we make no dispute, and often recommend them. But we deny, that any authority to introduce them into Christian assemblies can be fairly deduced either from precept or example, of Christ or his apostles; and that they were either necessary to

those who were inspired, or at all important to the discharge of the duty of public prayer.

In the early persecutions, the books of the Christians were sought after, and burnt; but no books of prayers, the Scriptures and utensils only are mentioned. Thus the argument against the use of written prayers, from a total silence, is equivalent to that against images. The most learned amongst the advocates of written forms, assert that every church was left to its own creed and form of prayer; and that afterwards the churches of a district agreed to a conformity among themselves. The first is proved by Sozomen, who asserts this of a church which arose from another; but he was in the fifth century. The latter is supported by the words of the council of Milvis, in which Augustine sat; but it extended only to a portion of Africa, and was adopted as a precaution against Pelagianism.

That amen was spoken aloud at the end of prayers, appears from the New Testament; this Jerom, in his day, the cotemporary of Augustine in the fifth century, compared to the thunder of heaven.<sup>b</sup> The *sursum corda, raise your hearts*, has been referred to the apostle James, by Cyril of Jerusalem, but too late, for he died A. D. 380. No mention of public forms of prayer was made in the first centuries, unless the Lord's prayer, the benediction, and sacramental words be exceptions. Justin Martyr, A. D. 140, describes to the emperor, the worship of a Christian assembly, in which the presiding presbyter prayed "according to his ability." Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century, says, in his Apology for Christianity, "We look up to heaven with hands expanded, because pure; with heads uncovered, because we are not ashamed; finally, without a monitor, because, from the heart we pray for rulers—army—senate—

<sup>b</sup> "Ad similitudinem celestis tonitru, amen reboat."—*Præf. ad Galatas*.



people—the world.” Basil, in the fourth century, advises how to pray; to begin with addressing God, “as much as you can,” in the words of Scripture; then give thanks; then confess; then offer your petitions. He prepared not a liturgy, but hymns to be sung in alternate verses; a practice which was in early and general use. Much error has been incurred, by taking several words which expressed *hymns* to signify *prayers*. The centuriators themselves were thus deceived. That in the fifth century, “scarcely two prayed alike,” is affirmed by Socrates, the historian, of his own age. Gregory the First, instituted “the whole institution of the mass,” and how much it resembles the Pagan worship, it is painful to behold. Pope Adrian, A. D. 796, confirmed the use of Gregory’s, against a false one, called the mass of Ambrose. Such is the origin of that liturgy, which the pious writer in the Church Register deems it sinful to neglect.

Believing that liturgies, confirmations, festivals and canonical ordinations as manifestly rest upon merely human authority, as do image worship, prayers to saints, and prayers for the dead, we feel, nevertheless, no disposition to dispute with those who follow them. Self-vindication is our only aim; for when it is asserted that the liturgy is commanded of God, and that we are guilty of the whole law for neglecting this duty, we stand impeached, either of the ignorance of those things, which we, who teach others, ought to investigate; or of that, which is far worse, of disingenuousness. We doubt not the conscientiousness of this writer, but we do question the correctness of his information; yet, at the same time, acknowledge the duty of investigating the truth; and profess our readiness to adopt his prayer book, so soon as he shall make it clear, that we ought so to do. Custom may have rendered a form important to him; to us it would prove an incumbrance. The Searcher of hearts needs not our words to know our desires; our prayers may ascend



in the unformed language of breathings of submission and of gratitude; yet words, without utterance, may be advantageously conceived for ourselves, or used for others; but then they must be spoken or written. In like manner, we adopt the prayers of others by assenting and joining mentally; or by aspirations without uttering a single word; or by following in words, or by adding our amen. We may offer written prayers in the same manner; but when long-familiar, they neither awaken nor engage the attention in such manner as those which are suggested by the immediate reflection of our minds on the things we express, or are uttered in the striking language of another's thoughts. In the view of a holy God, neither style nor sentiment, but the temper of the mind; not the eloquent address, but the humbling sense of his majesty and our nothingness, of his mercy and our wants; not the profession of a dependence on the merits of Christ, but the affiance of the soul upon the only mediation, either expressed with the utmost simplicity, or breathed from a devout heart, constitutes prayer. Imperfections, worse than of diction, exist in all our services. Defect of erudition is a matter of minor importance. The prayers of Indian Sarah, in hunger and rags, are as acceptable as those read from the splendid folio of a cathedral, by the archbishop of Canterbury in lawn sleeves. When the fire of love, glowing in the language of artless simplicity, engages and carries the hearts of the people; and every soul, rapt in the exercise, rises to the very foot of the throne; heaven and earth are brought together; even spectators are awed into silence and consternation. When do such effects follow the reading of a liturgy? After long observation, an obscure expression has rarely occurred in our public prayers; they have been obviously conformed to the truth, and often to the language of Scripture; the style, the manner, the sentiment were all adapted to the worshippers, whilst they who uttered them, evidently realized themselves

in their approaches to God, as joining with all Christians of every denomination, the general assembly of saints, whose names are written in heaven. To pray is the duty, and not to conflict about the mode. If each is accountable for himself, each should be at liberty to choose without censure; also, charity demands, that every one should be left to the full persuasion of his own mind.

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## NUMBER III.

THAT the lawfulness of composing and using a form may be justified by circumstances, is no more doubted by us, than the lawfulness of teaching the ignorant how to pray. Had this been the question, the proofs and arguments of the writer in the Church Register, would have been relevant. But his professed object is, to show that the adoption of a liturgy, and the reading of prayers in public, are duties; and finding no command either in the Old or New Testament of any such things, he attempts to establish them by the occasional joint prayers of the ancient Israelites, the sacerdotal benediction, and the Lord's prayer; all of which being far less than a liturgy, in the present use of the term, fix the blame of neglecting such imaginary duties as much on them as on us. To prevent his asserting, that he has "proved" that the Jews "used a set form," we have neither power nor inclination. But if he can show, that the ancient Jews had, beside psalmody, a written form of prayer, more than the benediction, then has he countervailed the evidence, that every man offered his own prayer, except in joint addresses on extraordinary occasions, and has found what a learned bigotted dignitary of his

own church must have escaped, who tells us in a very useful work, that, "neither of these," the stationary men of the temple, and the worshipping people of Israel, "had any public forms to pray by, nor any public ministers to officiate to them therein, but all prayed in private by themselves, and all according to their own private conceptions—and so continued to do, all the while the public sacrifices were offering up both morning and evening." He says the truth, and that they had no liturgy may be rested in with as much confidence, as any negative not mathematical. But we hold him not to the concessions of his party, for we admit no opinions where evidence only is required.

We are surprised, that we should be put to the necessity of asserting, that because the ancient Jews did, on some extraordinary occasions, join in prayer to God, it by no means follows, that in their temple-service they continually joined in public prayers. This defect wholly destroys the writer's superstructure of a presumption, that Christ and his disciples used a set form of prayer. That the Saviour did authorise joint prayer, and that it is our duty, under the gospel dispensation, no one denies: but so far is this fact from supporting his argument for a liturgy, that the circumstance of his expressly enjoining this duty strengthens the position, that even joint prayer had not been either his, or their previous custom. The proofs brought from the second and third centuries, that Christ had "taught his disciples how to pray," by no means establish, either that the apostles, or that the Christian churches in the days of the apostles, used it as a public form. That it was in the second century rehearsed in public, which we now do, is no more a proof, that the churches then had, and read a liturgy of written forms, than the same fact proves, the Presbyterian churches in our day have written prayers, which they read in their public service.

This writer cannot show us, that any apostle, or

any church in the first century, ever used the Lord's prayer as a form, so much as once. A mere possibility is no proof; and were this fact granted him, it could not sustain his argument; for, that it was lawful, is no evidence that it was necessary. We do not deny, that the giving of the prayer was a permission to use it as a form, though given merely as a pattern; but we think it was not commanded, because the Saviour's words so understood exclude every other prayer.

If it were allowable for us to put the issue of the public cause, upon the question, whether any one of the ten early writers, mentioned in his fourth number, has asserted that the church had a liturgy or form of public prayer, more than we have stated in our last number, we should not fear to do it; notwithstanding the Christian church, from obvious causes, outstripped the synagogue in its early imitation of the temple-service. If all he can prove, extends only to the Lord's prayer, and the words of Christ in appointing the two ordinances, then let every thing be cast out of the prayer-book, except these, and the dispute is terminated. But the cause of truth demands, that neither hearsay evidence, nor the mere opinions of any age, or uninspired writer, should be received; and the ancient fathers are credible witnesses only of the facts within their own knowledge respectively.

In the prayer of the disciples, (Acts iv. 24—31,) "*they all lift up their voices with one accord* ; consequently," he observes, "they all prayed the same thing, which they could not have done, had it not been previously set in order and drawn up." "Could not" one have spoken it, and "all" the rest repeated after him? "Could not" one have thus prayed, and "all" the rest have "lifted up their voice," amen, amen, "with one accord?" When, in verse 31, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word with boldness," it is equally just to say, "they all" spoke "the same thing, which they could not have done, had it



not been previously set in order and drawn up." Here the argument for reading prayers and sermons, stands supported by the same circumstances and words, and no doubt they may be affirmed of the apostles with equal truth. Let this mode of expression be tried in other passages. "In Acts 1, 10, 11," "two men in white apparel stood—and said, the men," &c. Did the two angels use a precomposed set form of address? Peter's speech, ch. iii. 12—26, is, in ch. iv. 1, referred to John as well as himself, in similar language, "and as they spake to the people." In each instance the act of the one having the concurrence of the other, was, with the utmost propriety, referred to both. Did each elder, (ch. iv. 6, 7,) ask the same question of Peter and John? Afterwards (ch. v. 29) the answer of Peter is considered as the answer of the other apostles. "Then Peter and the other apostles, answered," &c. But this prayer (ch. iv. 24) "was previously set in order and drawn up!" There was no time for it; Peter and John "being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them; and when they heard that, they lift up their voices with one accord, and said," &c. It was the sudden effusion of their hearts; if they had appointed any of their number to retire and draw up a form of prayer, worthy of the occasion, lest the impressive circumstances should induce them to betray more zeal than knowledge; instead of the feeling here described, the record would have been a lifeless form, and the worship a species of calculation bordering on hypocrisy. But "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost;" what need could there be, in their state, to "set in order and draw up" a prayer? After all, if we could believe this pious writer's construction of the passage, this special case would be no proof, either of the existence of a public liturgy at the period, or that a form of prayer was used in the ordinary worship of the apostles.

Because prayer was made without ceasing of the



church unto God for "Peter," who was imprisoned, the writer supposes, that it was, in all probability, in strict unison with the custom of set forms. But until such custom has been proved, no such *probability* exists. When the Presbyterian churches agree to pray for some object, no one infers, that they "agreed upon before hand, a set form; nor would the doing this, on a special occasion, be a ground even of *probability* that they used a public liturgy. Upon such probabilities, nevertheless, this writer has attempted to erect a demonstration of an ancient Jewish liturgy, founding it merely upon these instances, in which the people, upon extraordinary occasions, offered up a joint prayer, which he presumes was preconceived and written, although, at all other times, they prayed like the Pharisee and the Publican, each by himself. Neither is that which is occasional common, nor is joint prayer necessarily preconceived, written and read.

The desire of establishing an ancient Jewish liturgy, led Dr. Lightfoot to suppose the eighteen benedictions to be that liturgy; although destitute of proof sufficiently ancient, and carrying on their face, that they were written since the dispersion, and when there was neither temple nor sacrifice.

Justice is desirable in all things; to deduce sweeping conclusions from imbecile and unsupported premises, is unjust. This writer is safe in point of character, because his name is concealed: and the interrogative mode of his inference is probably a designed salvo for his conscience, when he says: "Coupling the evidence of the general use of the Lord's prayer by the apostles, with the strong testimony of the instances recorded in the Acts, can any one doubt of the authority of set forms? rather, can any one doubt of the necessity of them?" There has been no evidence of the general "use of the Lord's prayer by the apostles," no, not a solitary example of any such thing, nor can this writer produce one. The "testimony of the instances recorded in the Acts," we have seen proves

nothing more, than that the disciples joined in prayer, on particular occasions: but of their using a form in those instances, not a word is said, and even the probability in each case is excluded by the circumstances. Consequently, the "coupling" them together must be precisely the addition of two noughts. But the writer's first inference is the "*authority* of set forms." If he means that they may be lawfully used, to this no one objects; let every one use them who chooses; and we hope many do with real devotion. But if he intends by the phrase, that it was either the precept or practice of Christ or his apostles, to pray by set forms, what he says is perfectly gratuitous. His second conclusion from his unsupported premises, is the "*necessity*" of set forms. There not having been a single instance shown, either of the use of the Lord's prayer, or of any other set form by the disciples, the inference ought to have been, that they are not necessary. Prayer is the offering up of the desires of the heart, and why may not every one, who knows how to express his thoughts on other subjects, speak his wants to God? Nevertheless, he who has never cherished any desires, except those which were previously written for his use, and has been taught by this writer, that an attempt to pray without a set form would be presumption, and a want of humility, may feel a necessity of such aid; and let him have it free of censure. But we are said to "neglect" the use of forms, "from *ignorance* of the Scriptural authority of such custom." *Ignorant* as we are, we shall not be also *ungrateful* to this writer, if he will show us, where the Scriptures exhibit such a custom; and promise to give no more "vent to our own words" in public prayer, when he shall evince set forms to have been "the ordinances of Christ, and the practice of his apostles."

The zeal of this unknown writer was the most probable cause of his astonishment, when he asked: "What a *stretch of pride* it is in man possessing only, at the utmost, the ordinary operations of the Spirit, to

suppose, that he can safely practise that, which the fully inspired of God in the earliest and freest impulse of inspiration, under the gospel covenant, did not practise!" The "ordinary operations" are the "more excellent way," and preferable to gifts. There is some singularity, also, both in denominating them inspiration, and in supposing them compatible with a "*stretch of pride.*" But waiving these things, we appeal to the writer's own conscience, and ask, how he could assert, that the apostles "did not practise" extemporary prayer, when he has in vain attempted to show a single proof that they ever used a form? The imputation of a "stretch of pride" cast upon every one who prays in public, without a precomposed form, must extend with equal justice to every one, who preaches as did the apostles, without writing; and also to every man, who ventures to walk alone when he might use crutches.

The charges of *pride* and *ignorance*, we are, because fallen men, less able to parry, than the arguments for a liturgy; and to recriminate by showing, that the use of forms in praying and preaching is some evidence of both the flaws, might wound the feelings of the writer, if he should be, as we suppose he is, both a Christian and a gentleman. But why should it be "a stretch of pride—to suppose that we would safely practise" extemporary prayer, if we have spent as much time, labor, and expense in obtaining knowledge and language, as we ought to have done? And why should we aim at a character for correctness, which is impossible to human nature? We apprehend no danger; and think we have followed as closely the examples of Christ and his apostles, as they who read or rehearse every word. If we should sit down to compose a prayer, and think God not to see what we are doing, till we have prepared it, and appear in the public desk to read it, we disparage his perfections; but if he sees us, in all our deliberations upon what we will say, and what withhold, we have gained nothing

in point of *safety*. If by the terms, "*safely practise*," the writer had respect to the approbation of men, which we can scarcely imagine, such argument for forms is contemptibly puerile, and the apprehensions of danger idolatrous.

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#### NUMBER IV.

To serve the writer under this title in the Church Register, we will concede any thing that is true ; and will cheerfully admit, that if any part of the worship under the Mosaic dispensation was not typical, and has not been removed by the gospel, it still continues : and that thus, not only the right of children to be received by circumcision into the church, whose parents were members, not being taken away, and baptism now evidently occupying the place of circumcision, infant baptism is plainly justified ; but also the apostles were left both for the mode and subjects of baptism, almost entirely to their previous Jewish customs. At his reasoning for the baptism of females, because salvation is offered to all, of which he thinks they only are capable, who have been admitted by baptism into "the state of covenanted grace," we hesitate ; because baptism, although a sign only of passing from a sinful to a holy state, and not the change itself, either of nature or of state, was anciently confounded with and called regeneration ; yet as it cannot produce on the mind a mechanical effect, irrespectively of its own choice ; so when Christ distinguished between being *born of the water* and of *the spirit*, his words certainly did neither imply, that the one birth was the same as the other, nor that the one was the cause of the other. This doctrine, like his liturgy, with its confirmation,



canonical ordination, and many other things, should have been, at the Reformation, abandoned as human inventions.

Prayer is the common duty of Jew and Gentile, and in its nature personal, whether public or private, being the language of the heart, and the mode consequently unimportant. Among the distinguished people, the emblem of Divine Majesty rested on the mercy-seat; there he put his name; from thence blessed the worshippers. The priests, as mediators, offered the morning and evening sacrifices, and burned the incense between the mercy-seat and the people, "who were praying without." (Luke i. 9, 10.) The incense of the priests and the prayers of the saints, are often associated in the Scriptures. (Exod. xxx. 67; Ps. cxli. 2, xxxviii. 2; Rev. v. 8, viii. 3, 4.) The sanctuary, the priests, and the incense were types, (Heb. ix. 24,) but now Christians may draw near with boldness to the throne of grace. (Heb. iv. 14, 16, x. 21, 22.) The Sovereign of the Universe is the object of prayer. He may have mercy upon whom He will; but He will maintain the honor of his rectoral government, and extend his mercy only through Christ. The work of the priests was not to speak the petition of the people, but to act as typical mediators; and whilst they were offering sacrifices, and burning the incense of the morning and evening, the people at the temple, in the synagogues, in the streets and market places, in their closets or in foreign lands, were praying with their faces towards the mercy-seat. Nevertheless, if it can be shown that there was a liturgy under the former dispensation, in public use in the temple, we are as ready to receive and use it, with suitable modifications, as we are to sing the Psalms of David. But if the truth really is, that each appeared and prayed in his own words, and considered that the public sacrifices might afford him the advantage of procuring acceptance for his requests, he asked for himself, not in preconceived written forms, but whatsoever he thought he most



needed. In like manner, when a few Christians are assembled, the presence of God is promised to their worship; and whether one utters a prayer, or many pray in succession, the prayer is still necessarily several, for each adopts what suits his views, and adds what he chooses in mental aspirations, unembarrassed by set words; and that God, who sees the heart, will answer the prayer of faith. If it be a printed form, it is equally prayer, by those who offer it up, making it their own, but not otherwise.

An argument predicated upon the want of a prohibition of set forms, is but a waste of words, unless it be first shown, that such forms had previously existed. To the challenge given by the writer in the Church Register, "to adduce one instance that contains any allusion to such prohibition," we answer, we will take up the gauntlet the moment he shows "the custom of using set forms in the public worship of the Jews," prior to the Christian era; and we shall be satisfied, if he can show precept, example, or even an allusion to a written liturgy in the Scriptures: and common sense dictates, that no prohibition can be reasonably expected, of that which had no previous existence. The amount of his argument seems to be, that every thing not prohibited is lawful; which will justify the teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. We shall never object to their using set forms of prayer, who prefer to do so: but we censure the denominating any thing the command of God, which is of merely human appointment, and pronounce it to be will-worship. It is probable, that neither Aaron, nor Jeroboam, designed to change the object of worship; they introduced only other signs of the divine presence. But their innovations invaded the divine prerogative, and were treason. Liturgies having neither precept, nor example under either dispensation, fall under the same censure; and although they may be used innocently by those who are accustomed thus to worship, for prayer is the desire of the heart; yet

when introduced either by civil or ecclesiastical authority, as the command of God, who has commanded no such thing, it is an error like his, who said, "these be thy gods, (*meaning the singular,*) Oh Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." We are forced to these representations, that this pious writer may see, that it is neither *insincerity* nor *pride* which prevents our confessing such practice to be "Scriptural and apostolic," but a perfect conviction that it is neither; and a persuasion that it ought not to have been introduced. If prayer, even when joint, be personal and several, and strictly the application of a child to a father in every instance, the unrenewed never pray; for every *one who asketh receiveth*, and they who receive not, have not asked. When prayer, therefore, is defined the offering up the desires of the heart, it must be understood only of holy desires; otherwise it is an abomination, and these exist only in the justified. More may agree in their petitions, but there is not so much one prayer as a concert of prayers, which are as numerous as the believing worshippers.

The fifth number presents also an argument, novel to us, and ingenious—"among the diversities of gifts—there is no mention of the gift of praying;" whence he infers that the necessity of it was prevented by the custom, "of offering up congregationally their prayers in a pre-composed and set form." This is a fine example of the *non causa pro causa*, *the assignation of a wrong cause*. Gifts were distinguished from grace those might exist where the party was still an enemy, grace only where the disposition was changed. So far as prayer consisted of words or sentiments, it might be a gift; but more strictly, prayer is the offering up of the desires of the heart, under which aspect, it is moral, not physical, of grace not by gift, and ordinary not extraordinary. The nature of prayer, therefore, and not the use of forms, prevented the enumeration of prayer among the gifts, which were bestowed

under the administration of the Spirit, in planting the churches. But this advocate of the divine authority of liturgies, thinks his argument derives "weight from the apostle's injunction—not to pray in an unknown tongue, because the people could not say amen, to such prayers:" and he infers, "neither can they say amen to prayers uttered by the ministers extemporaneously; because they are to know what they are praying for, and how they are praying, which men in general cannot do, when any person, though inspired, is praying for them in words and sentiments which are his own, and unknown to others before they are uttered." If *inspired*, it is scarcely discernible how the *words* and *sentiments* should be his own. Also, in public, which is joint prayer, the speaker does not usually "pray for them" who hear, but uses the first person plural. But that the prohibition to pray in an unknown tongue should aid the cause of liturgies, it must be presumed that the church of Corinth had liturgies in different tongues, and that the apostle meant to restrict them to the use of those only which the people could understand. What would the Catholics say to this? But the design of the apostle was to correct, and prevent the abuse of gifts; and particularly the vanity of praying in the words of an unknown language. The gift of tongues was important, that strangers might hear the gospel; but public prayers should be spoken in the common language, that every one might make them their own by their amen, and do the very thing of which the writer has said, "neither can they say amen to prayers uttered extemporaneously."

Another argument adduced is, that "as all things are to be *done decently and in order*, so the best way of insuring that decency and order, was, that all should pray with one mind and one mouth, which could only be done congregationally by the adoption of prayers one and the same, and known and understood by all." This precept of decency and order was used by Bellarmine to establish the whole service and ceremonies

of the church of Rome; and is as valid for the whole as it is for a part; and this writer is as much bound by it to receive the popish ritual, as we are to adopt his. Our ideas of decency and order are probably diverse. He thinks decency and order impossible in a congregation where all rise up to pray, and hear in profound silence the words of him who leads, and lift up in aspirations his petitions, adding what breathings they choose, in the name of Christ, to the throne of God, whom they thus approach with the confidence of children to a father. To us, probably through desuetude, when we hear the reader's words echoed back from every corner of the church, in every possible tone, loud and soft, harsh and smooth, hurried and slow; and our ears are not more offended with discords, than our eyes by a confusion of countenances, some gay and absent, others hanging upon the lips of the speaker, and others fixed upon their books, which of the two modes of worship is most favorable to decency and order, appears not doubtful. Nor is there with us any uncertainty, either about the time or manner of the introduction of liturgies, as we hinted in our second number. We not only have all the certainty that a negative admits, that none of these written forms existed in the first ages of Christianity; but also evidence, that they came in at a period when the church had become greatly corrupted. The similarity which the liturgy advocated by this writer, bears unto the Latin Catholic liturgy, shows its origin; and the clerical sentiment of the day was no doubt expressed by a learned doctor of the establishment, when he said, "As to our churches prescribing a liturgy of set forms of prayer and administration of sacraments, and other public offices, it is easy to show, that symbolizing with the church of Rome is so far from being culpable, and much more from being a just ground of separation from our church, that it is highly commendable." Yet we do not think, and therefore cannot say of ours, that it is the only mode in which



worship can be rightly offered; and were surprised, when we read in the Church Register, that to "pray with one mind and *one mouth*," can "only be done congregationally by the adoption of prayers one and the same, and known and understood by all." We had thought any mode sufficient in which the desire of the heart can be offered; but if *one mouth* be essential, how can many be one?

An argument is drawn also from the meaning of the original word rendered "order," in the passage of Scripture last cited; which, he thinks, denotes a previous arrangement and setting in order; hence, he asks, if Paul may not have referred to an "order which had been prescribed?" His interrogations imply a doubtfulness, which it is to his credit not to conceal. His perplexities demand commiseration. But he ascends to no higher authority than the opinions of a modern German lexicographer, which merits no answer. A writer of his own church, understanding this same word to signify a *rule* or *canon*, has used it as an argument against allowing toleration to our fathers; a favor we do not ask; and has observed in the true spirit of these times: "We must not break God's commands in charity to them, and therefore we must not perform public services *indecently and disorderly*, for the sake of tender consciences." Thank heaven, those days are past.

That "the church of England," meaning, we suppose, in America, "holds fast the form of sound words" in "articles of belief," and "modes of worship," is matter of gratulation with this writer, in which we also partake; for we think her articles are sound in the main, and of her modes of worship would make no complaint. That much piety exists among her evangelical members, we are happy to have no doubt; of the rest, we presume not to judge; but possessing kind feelings to the denomination, as a branch of the church of Christ, we wish never to say, or write a word against her government or ritual;



but the same uncharitable spirit, which, by passing an ecclesiastical ostracism, disgusted and exiled our fathers, has followed us in our retreat with its old, ignorant, and unfounded monopoly. To vindicate the truth is a duty easy, all that is necessary to us being merely to disclose the facts of ancient history, when the unadulterated cause of the gospel will recommend itself.

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## NUMBER V.

WHILST the Christian reads the Psalms of David with self-application, pleasure springs from the reflection, that he reads the word of God; yet in almost every Psalm we pass by things which we do not lift up to the throne of grace. To these set forms of inspiration none object; but their first design was praise. Had the apostles left us set forms of prayer, as they must have been also inspired, they would have fallen into general use. If the author of Liturgical Considerations, in the Church Register, could have shown "the use of set forms, by the apostles," "it matters not on how few occasions," we should have gladly received them; but whether a solitary instance has appeared, an impartial public can judge. His supposition, that apostolic practice would continue to A. D. 120 or 130, is reasonable; and we concede still more, that though he has not shown, that the apostles used set forms of prayer in public, yet if the churches in any short period after their day, did in fact use such forms, then must they have been in use in the times of inspiration; and we follow his researches on this point with impartiality.

In Clement, who is first adjured, we have the utmost

confidence. But what in his letter could have invited the appeal, baffles conjecture. The Greek word "liturgy" does occur at each of the places cited, yet this writer's prudence has rendered it *worship* and *service*. The church at Corinth had existed long under those, who by the extraordinary gifts and guidance of the Spirit, planted the first churches; and this letter being written before the destruction of Jerusalem, they could have had presbyters but a few years. The object of the letter, being to cause them to receive again their presbyters, whom they had rejected, it is evident they had been averse to church order. To this Clement presses them as the ordinance of God. "*Where, and by whom he wills things to be accomplished, he has ordained, in his sovereign pleasure; that all things piously done unto well pleasing, might be acceptable unto his own will.*" He then refers them to the services (*liturgies*) of the temple, appointed to the high priest, and the rest of the priesthood, alleging that laymen were there restricted to their own duties. Immediately he observes, "let each one of you brethren praise God in his own sphere, living in a good conscience, each not exceeding the prescribed rule of his service, with reverence." Again he refers them to the worship at Jerusalem, and argues the greater guilt of the Christians at Corinth, from their greater knowledge. The church was therefore not to continue without presbyters, nor their duties to be invaded by those, who had not been appointed to them. The design of Clement is clear, and his reasoning forcible, but we discern not even the most remote allusion, in either passage, to the use of set forms in worship.

"Polycarp exhorts the Philippians to return to the word, that was delivered from the beginning, *watching unto prayer.*" This advice of Paul, Cyprian observes, "shows that they can obtain from God, what they ask, whom God sees to be *watching in prayer.*" They recommend an importunity like that of the Canaanite,

who would receive no denial, and are rather an argument against, than for set forms of prayer.

The expressions "one common supplication," "one common prayer," "your joint prayers" in the letter ascribed to the pious Ignatius, and which are a blot upon his memory, imply no necessity, that the prayers should have been written and read; for if one led the worship, and the rest united, the prayer was *one*, *joint*, and *common*. In this mode the unlearned could unite as well as those who could read. If prayer books had been then the order of the day, the cumbersome machinery could not have escaped notice. These "powerful" prayers were of single congregations, for though those spurious letters were written long after the death of the martyr, and when episcopacy had commenced in its parochial form; yet even then, liturgies in the sense of written prayers, were unknown. Evidence to procure belief, should flow from pure fountains, but the writer of those letters though unworthy of credit, had not anticipated liturgies.

"Tertullian does not notice in his apology any change." Unless liturgies had been introduced in his day, there was no change, that could have accrued on this subject; but we have seen, that they were introduced long afterwards. "Besides the use of the Lord's prayer, and the psalms, he mentions the subject of their constant supplications, from which we may infer that there were additional forms used by the Christians, besides that perfect one, given by our Lord himself." Although the repeated exhibition of the Lord's prayer affords a fair presumption that there was no other pattern given by him, yet this writer thence infers the existence of more. Also, because Tertullian mentions *different subjects* of prayer, he presumes the prayers must have been written and read; but as none such have been shown to have then existed, and no public forms to have been then in use, except the rehearsal of the Lord's prayer, the presumption is precisely the reverse, and the infer-

ence against him. Christians were persecuted, because they would not offer to the gods sacrifices for the Emperor; Tertullian alleged that they could not apply to gods unable to afford help, but that they prayed to the Almighty for the Emperor; and to establish the truth of what he said, he referred his enemies to the Scriptures which required Christians to pray for their enemies, their persecutors, and for Emperors, and for all who were in authority. *Apol.* c. 31. If Christians had then used written forms of prayer, they must have been produced as the best evidence, but his reference to the Scriptures, to prove the principles of Christians, evinces that they had no forms, which they could bring in defence.

Cyprian is next adduced; "whose evidence is still more explicit, when he warns Christians, not to babble their prayers, in unpremeditated, or disorderly words; neither to use a tumultuous or confounding loquacity, and earnestly exhorts his flock, to take care their hearts and voices go together in prayer." We suppose the passage, here spoken of, to be, "non ventilare preces nostras inconditis vocibus, nec petitionem commendandam modeste Deo, tumultuosa loquacitate jactare: quia Deus non vocis, sed cordis auditor est." If the people, who were here reprov'd used only a written liturgy, it is impossible, that they should have been guilty of babbling, disorderly words, and tumultuous loquacity: but these improprieties might readily have occurred in the secluded assemblies of zealous, persecuted Christians, where many successively led in prayer; and especially, if they spoke aloud their *amen*, accompanied with pious effusions. Cyprian confirms this view by proposing immediately in the same paragraph the example of Hannah; whom he affirms to have been a type of the church, *who spoke not with her voice but with her heart,—and obtained what she sought.* She certainly prayed without a written form, and the church was advised to pray as she did. This "evidence is still more explicit," for it substitutes among



the people mental, in the place of vocal prayer. But because the writing is on the subject of the Lord's prayer, which in the third century was publicly recited by memory, it may be thought, that he reproves the disorderly rehearsal of this aloud by the people; it must be remembered however that the accusation was of loquacity, which implies that they used their own words.

“Gregory Thaumaturgus A. D. 270, composed or compiled a liturgy for the use of the churches in Cappadocia, which continued to be used without any variation till the time of—— Basil about one hundred years after.” We are sorry to see this hackneyed allegation here presented with absolute positiveness, notwithstanding the notoriety of the numerous objections. If we suppose it to be Basil's, it is hearsay evidence, and not nearer to its time than a century; but it is contradicted by his sixty-third epistle, in so many words, wherein speaking to them of Gregory Thaumaturgus, he says, “you have preserved nothing.” The evidence is allowed by Erasmus, who translated the piece, and by others, to have been in part, or whole, a forgery in the name of Basil; and this opinion was not founded merely upon diversity of style; but a falsehood, of which that writer was incapable. But the words “they have not added any practice, word, or mystical type, besides what he had left them,” do not speak that he had left them a liturgy. If the piece be genuine, it is a defence of Basil for varying the form of the doxology; and in the whole of it we can find nothing, which concerns forms or liturgies, and the Greek terms rendered *word*, *mystical*, and *type* are each, in other parts of it, plainly used for the doxology. It is, therefore, and we believe justly denied, “that there ever was such a thing in the world as Gregory Thaumaturgus's liturgy,” and we assert with much confidence, that we know not a particle of proof of any such thing.

“Eusebius A. D. 315, in his life of Constantine—



records even a form appointed by the Emperor to be used by his foreign soldiers." The first Christian Emperor being by the laws of the empire the pontifex maximus, was entitled to prescribe to the heathenish part of his army their religious rites; and might frame this short prayer accommodated to "saint, to savage and to sage," wherein the sovereignty of God only is mentioned, without other titles, and not a word either peculiar to Christianity, or offensive to heathens is found. This was furnished to all in the Latin, that they might read and be prepared to rehearse it; and on Sunday they paraded in an open field, when upon a signal given, they pronounced these words and no more. It was probably intended by the Emperor in one sense, and understood by his pagan soldiers in another. That it should be written was absolutely necessary, otherwise they could neither judge of, nor use it. It was rather a profession of allegiance, containing prayers for the Emperor and his family, than an act of worship. This is the first form made to be used as such in public, which the writer has found, and this was designed for, and rehearsed only by pagans, not by a Christian church. The residue of the army rested on the day, and *without any hindrance* resorted for worship to the Christian assemblies. This singular compromise of Constantine, is no proof, that there existed a liturgy of written prayers, even at that period, which was read in the churches.

"He," *Constantine*, "also speaks of *appeasing Christ by sacred prayer, and frequent litanies*, as a mode of worship well established." The theology of this passage was in character both for Constantine and Eusebius; for neither of them had right views of the mediatorial character. The English word *litany* means a *form of supplication*; the Greek word *litany* meant *supplication* itself; *frequent* is not in our copy. The reasons which prevented the anglicising the word *liturgy* in Clement, should have excluded the English word *litany* here. This oversight is aggravated by the use of italics.

But we forbear; either disappointment may have exasperated zeal; or the writer begged the question unguardedly; yet justice to our cause demands, that we should say, what every discriminating mind will discern, that the Greek words afford not a shadow of proof of any written forms of prayer whatever.

“Gregory Nazianzen testifies of — Basil that the appointment of prayers was among his remarkable deeds.” If forms had existed under both dispensations, and if his wonder-working predecessor had left a liturgy, from which the people never swerved in *act, word, or mystic type*, 'tis difficult to perceive how Basil's *appointment of prayers* should be a *remarkable deed*. But his prayers were *sung*; and how Basil promoted the alternate way of singing, may be seen by his own account of it, in his sixty-third epistle.

“This father also records that Julian the apostate, in his endeavor to subvert Christianity, designed to form his pagan rites of worship like those already established by the Christians, and that he intended to institute a *form of prayer*.” The subtle designs of Julian we admit, and have admired the wisdom and prudence of his advices to pagan priests, but a “form of prayer” was not that, which Gregory Nazianzen meant, or Julian intended. That the original word means also hymns in ancient writers, has been often abundantly shown. Also the words rendered *form* (literally, *type in part*) were designed to express *partial resemblance*. Julian knew, that the Christian assemblies were much occupied in, and highly delighted with their alternate psalmody, and he wished something of the kind, to render paganism popular, and balance this advantage, possessed by the Christian worship.

We have now followed the writer in the Church Register to the fourth century, and if we could from thence date the commencement of written public forms of prayer, so many were the corruptions of the church at that period, that they would deserve no

more regard, than if they had commenced in the present age. But to justify the representations we gave in a former number, we will consider the next proof, which derives much plausibility from the modern senses of some of the terms.

“In the council of Laodicia a canon was arranged that the *same liturgy of prayer should be used at the ninth hour and in the evening*. This council was called about A. D. 310, principally on account of an innovation, which some persons were disposed to make by offering up their own prayers one part of the day, and those which they had received from their forefathers on the other.” The original word is *liturgy*, which to take in its modern sense is begging the question. This meaning ought first to be shown to be as old as that council; but it then meant any service of a public nature. The Greek word *liturgy* occurs Acts. xiii. 2. Rom. xv. 16, 27. Philip. ii. 17, 30. 2 Cor. ix. 12. Heb. viii. 2, 6. ix. 21, but no one ventures to prove by the Greek of those passages the existence of set forms of written prayers. Also the word in the canon rendered *prayers*, is the same that we mentioned as often signifying psalms or hymns, and so it was understood by some of the Greek writers upon this canon. But against these things this writer has provided a defence, by giving us the design of the council in making this canon; yet it is all perfectly gratuitous; until he has proved, what he has alleged, he has done nothing. We might also introduce, if opinions were any thing, that of a Greek historian, who says on this canon, what is more feasible, that there were afternoon hymns sung, but the people used others as *vespers*, or evening songs, in their meetings to prevent which the synod determined, that the afternoon praises should also be used in the evening. They designed probably to restrain irregularities, and promote devotion. And the canon which precedes it, and which provides, that two hymns or psalms should not follow in immediate succession, favors the opinion. This council was in-

considerable, is omitted by some, its date very uncertain, its authority nothing, and some of its canons a reproach. The thirteenth removed from the people the choice of their ministers; the fifteenth prohibited any in the church from singing, except those who went into the gallery of singers. Yet it may be some evidence of the condition of the churches in the proconsular Asia at that time, and does show, that either in their praises, or prayers, the people were restricted by the clergy assuming an authority not their due. But long afterwards, the third council of Carthage gave their approbation of some prayers, and directed that the people should also use those, which were collected by the *wiser sort*; and they express their object to have been to exclude errors in faith. These things evince a *gradual progress* towards the public use of written prayers, and are consequently wholly irreconcilable with the opinion, that the church had a liturgy, in the modern sense of the word, from the days of the apostles.

*Cavilling against the expediency of set forms* could not be, when neither a tongue nor a pen had been moved. Nor could we err from "the example prescribed by God, practised and sanctioned by our Saviour and his apostles, and persevered in by the Christian church," if there was neither such example or practice. Were the arguments of this writer as strong as his confidence, his labors would appear to more advantage, but he cannot expect us to believe without, or contrary to evidence; if such he has, he will oblige us by putting his finger upon a single fact, that will show a public liturgy or set form to have been used in the church, in or soon after the apostolic age; for when we read of the effect of sinning upon a single point, we fear to trust that theology, which supposes any *crime not so heinous as to exclude from salvation*.



## NUMBER VI.

THE professed object of the seventh number, under this title in the Church Register, is to show, "what these forms and prayers were—employed in the" *ancient* "public worship." To special instances of written prayers, both national and private, in the Old Testament, the attention of the reader has been called; that psalms were sung in the temple, even stately, no one denies; also, that in the synagogues the Scriptures were read, and sometimes explained, is known to all who read the gospels. The first Christians were Jews, worshipped in the synagogues on the Sabbaths, in their own assemblies on the Lord's day, and were considered and tolerated by the Roman government only as Jews, the worship of the first churches must consequently have nearly conformed to that of the synagogues; if this writer therefore can show a liturgy of the synagogue, *in the apostles' days*, he will do much.

"From the Mishna we learn that eighteen collects, or benedictions were used, which are ascribed to Ezra, the chief of the great Sanhedrim."

The Mishna is a compilation of those traditions, which Christ censured. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Jews were again subjected to a second destruction; their losses in public men and schools, and the scattering of the people into other countries, are the reasons assigned for the writing of their traditions. This labour was accomplished by a Rabbi, whose name is still fresh with them; and was called the Mishna; the date whereof is placed by universal consent between A. D. 150 and 200. The credit of the book is nothing, except with the sect, who receive its fables. The Mishna, differing from other writings of the ancient Jews on the origin of the benedictions, a comparison has been made by Vitringa.



The evidence, that Ezra wrote the benedictions, comes too late, and is not only at best a mere hearsay, but wholly incredible. Had the benedictions existed from the days of Ezra, they must have been unwritten till the Mishna, which consists of things previously unwritten. If such *traditional prayers* were possible, and could have existed; why are they not mentioned in the New Testament? But they can tell their own age. We read in one of them; “dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, thy city, as thou hast promised, and build it quickly in our days, with a building, that shall continue for ever.” In another it is said—“bring again the levitical ministry into the temple of thy house, and accept quickly, with love and good will, the sacrifices of the Israelites, to be consumed with fire, with their prayers,” &c. Thus do the benedictions themselves show, that they were written, when the Jews had neither city, nor temple, nor sacrifices. That they were composed since the dispersion, is evident from these words; “call us by the sound of the great trumpet to our liberty, and lift the standard, to which all our dispersion may be gathered from *the four regions of the earth* to our own land.” Also when they ask; “let there be no hope to the *apostates from religion*, let all *heretics suddenly perish*, how many soever they be. May the kingdom of pride be eradicated, and suddenly broken in our days,” they must have intended by *apostates* and *heretics* Jewish Christians, and by the *proud kingdom* the Roman empire. The sacrifices of the temple were of divine authority, until the death of Christ; and they still, though improperly, continued when the epistle to the Hebrews was written; and also when Clement wrote the letter, cited in our last number. But as long as the city, temple, sacrifices, and levitical ministry remained, these prayers could not have been offered. Not only is it absurd to suppose, that either Christ, or his apostles, or the primitive churches ever did, or with propriety could have offered these prayers; but there is no evidence, upon

which to found even a probability, that the Jews themselves offered them, until after that dispersion, which followed the second destruction of the Jewish people.

It is asserted that these benedictions, "formed their principal prayers, and the remainder probably were made up of the precatory parts of the psalms." As it is certain, that the eighteen benedictions were never offered in prayer in the temple, for then the people must have spoken falsely, because the prayers do themselves say, that there was neither temple, nor sacrifice, nor priestly services; so the *probability* that, "the remainder, were made up of the precatory parts of the psalms," is destitute of proof, unless singing be called reading. In the synagogues they were no doubt read with the other Scriptures; but in the temple the psalms were sung by the order of singers.

The "hours of prayer" were those in which the sacrifices were offered, and the incense burned, and whilst the priests were thus occupied, prayers were the business of the people, who "stood without," as they did at the time of the vision of Zacharias, each praying for himself like the pharisee and publican. The Jews did often at their meals each ask a blessing audibly for himself; and with propriety, if all prayer be in its nature several and personal, even when joined in by others.

We are *again* told that, "In the apostolic writings we read of no prohibition against the use of established forms." True: nor are they mentioned at all, because they had no existence. "It becomes therefore those, who are a form to themselves, to show their reasons, why they reject this custom." There was no such *custom* among either Jews or Christians till the period when the church was corrupted; and this circumstance is a good *reason* for *rejecting* forms. They, who were a *law to themselves*, were heathens; and we, *who are a form to ourselves*, are also left to "*uncovenanted mercy*;" but are nevertheless able to show, both the reason of our hope, and also *reasons* for *rejecting* writ-

ten forms of public prayers. We have many *special* reasons for objecting to the forms used both by the Catholic, and Episcopal churches, which we must show if compelled. We have other general ones; we find in experience no need of them; and doubt their utility in public worship; out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth can speak. If ministers be incompetent to lead without such help, they are unfit for their office. Forms restrict devotion, cramp the desires of the heart, and by long familiarity become dead and insipid; they have also an unhappy tendency to supersede a mental intercourse with God, and to render men contented with external homage. But above all we think, that no uninspired men have a right to saddle the church of Christ with a set of words and phrases, to which the desires, confessions, and petitions of the people, must be confined in public worship.

That universals cannot be deduced from particulars, is not less a rule in morals, than in reasoning; but the promise of success given by the Saviour to the prayer of two or three, who have agreed to ask for some common object, though described as a special case, and left by him optional, is incautiously by the unknown writer converted into a general rule, and made a duty. From hence also he has inferred, that—"every prayer uttered *extempore* in the congregation, must be unknown to the community, till it is offered, and cannot therefore be considered as the joint and agreed prayer of the persons met together for public worship." It cannot be a duty in every case to agree previously on the object for which we are to pray; also it is not necessary, to the agreement implied in Christ's language that the very words of the prayer should be previously ascertained. Nor does the Saviour's language require that the agreement be even previous to the prayer; if the same petitions, or even desires, are offered by different persons, his design is fulfilled.

To pray with the understanding is an apostolic advice; whence he also argues the necessity of written prayers, because,—“certainly no one, except the person who is the organ of the prayer, can fulfil the apostle’s direction to pray with the understanding.” So often as men take the language of Scripture in other than its original sense, they must mistake the truth. This writer uses the word “understanding” for a *previous* knowledge of the *words* of the prayer; but the apostle meant by it a knowledge of the *subject matter*, and of the *propriety of asking at the time of uttering* the prayer. “How shall the unlearned say amen—seeing he *understandeth* not what thou sayest,” because praying in an unknown tongue. It is not necessary that “the organ of prayer” should previously know the words he is to use. The most affecting, fervent, and best prayers, which believers ever make, are without previous arrangement, or preparation, except an effort to obtain a humble composed frame of mind. He who speaks, and they who hear, and join with the heart in such prayer, do, in the sense of the apostle, pray with the spirit and the understanding’ also.

Because the Roman Christians were divided about weeks and days, the apostle prayed God to grant them a sameness of views, that they might *unanimously with one mouth glorify God*. Rom. xv. 6. This is made an argument for written prayers, because *one mind and one mouth*,—“could not be, if they did not use prayers common to all.” But the apostle prayed, that God would give them the same views, and not a written form; for he concluded, that with this gift their words would be sufficient. The Corinthian church having become discordant, the apostle advised them to *speak the same thing*, and be *perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment*, i Cor. i. 10, “which is an express injunction for unity of worship and unity of faith; the first of which is preserved by *established* prayers, known before, and agreed upon by all; and the latter by a form of belief, or creed, assented to by



agreeing Christians." When any thing is enjoined, whatever is necessary to such obedience is also commanded; but every thing which might promote the end is not also enjoined. If forms may be thus justified, so may images, because they enliven devotion: in like manner, an establishment, supported by an inquisition, since they produce unity of faith, must be lawful. The creed foisted in, we suppose either to be the apostles, which no one of them ever saw; or that of Athanasius, made after his day, both of which are in the main good, though of no authority; but how the rehearsal of a creed can be an act of worship, must be left to him to decide, who can so happily prove that the words of the apostle require the things.

In "*praying always with all prayer and supplication with the Spirit*"—the word rendered *supplication* exactly answers to the term *litany*; "and it has great force," in the words "*in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.*"—"In this passage we have a direction from the apostle to use in our public service, prayers, litanies and thanksgivings." What force can this writer intend, except in support of a litany in the sense of the compilers of the prayer-book? Unless it be "a direction from the apostle" how to make the prayer book, these quotations are wholly irrelevant. Thus understood, his argument is level to the meanest capacity. The apostle has inculcated, besides prayer, which means "that mode of addressing God, which in the people's name is offered up by the minister, and responded to, with amen, by them," also, the duty of supplication; but the Greek word for "*supplication*, exactly answers to litany;" therefore he has given "direction" to make a litany. The writer's pious zeal for his prayer book probably prevented his discerning, that he used the word litany in a sense not intended by the apostle; yet the effect is, that his argument is worth nothing.

The professed design of this number was to consider, "what these forms and prayers were, in their pub-



lic worship;" but the total failure, both with regard to the Jews, and primitive Christians, is a practical proof of the weakness of his cause.

When the desire of Truth, or the propriety of self-vindication leads the unprejudiced to investigate the origin of liturgies, they will be found to have arisen long after the days of the apostles; first in individual churches, and then to have obtained in larger districts, as a merely human contrivance professedly to exclude error; and afterwards to have been continued as a master-piece of policy to perpetuate innovations, and supersede the sacred text.

Though to confess guilt, of which we are not conscious, to ask for blessings whereof we feel no need; and to give thanks for spiritual operations, of which we are not the subjects, be insincerity, and therefore guilt; yet because written prayers, when orthodox are lawful means of instruction, there ought to be no censure for those, who use them; but to represent them as an ordinance of God, is to depart from facts, and to censure unjustly those who reject them; to repel such attempts is a debt we owe to truth, to the discharge of which, we desire only her evidence.

To pray is the highest privilege, and most important duty; and he is the happiest who has a heart *always to pray*; the cultivation of such a frame is the best course we can pursue in life. To the unrenewed, who never pray, no mode can supply their defect of disposition; but the child by adoption will not be prevented from his delightful work; whether the public prayers be written, or spoken, he will make them his own, and advance from strength to strength, until he reaches that mount, where prayer gives place to praise.

## NUMBER VII.

THE subject of the eighth number is declared to be, "The forms used in the church in all ages." By "forms" the writer must intend, in this place, modes of worship, of whatsoever kind; otherwise his first Scriptural proofs<sup>a</sup> have no bearing upon his subject. His error in styling Timothy bishop of *Crete*, is as innocent in effect, as it was in intention; for, not abiding at Ephesus, the youth followed his spiritual father into Macedonia, and never appears to have returned. But he ought not to have been degraded from an evangelist, we mean not the modern unscriptural sense of the term; he had the extraordinary superintendence of the Spirit, and was subordinate only to the guidance of apostles.

"*I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, that is, litanies,*"<sup>b</sup> &c. That is, litanies? neither is the Greek word here litanies; nor does the Greek word *litany* at all mean litany in the present sense of the word; nor consequently, can any argument thence arise for writing what are called litanies in prayer-books. "This injunction comprehends a complete analysis of what should constitute the precatory part of public worship." There is nothing of any "form used in the church" of Ephesus, the exhortation rather implies that there was none. So far from a direction to use a liturgy, the language shows them for what they are to pray; the prayer was therefore unwritten. If this writer's liturgy is conformed to the parts and kinds of prayer here described, yet the apostle knew nothing of written liturgies, nor does the passage require, or even contemplate, any such thing.

<sup>a</sup> Col. iii. 16, 17, iv. 2, 3. 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

“*Hold fast the form of sound words*—refers to a formulary of faith, as a creed; or a form of prayer, as a liturgy. Here then is authority for the repeating of creeds.” “*Hold fast*,” literally *have, possess, or retain*, is not to “*repeat*.” The “*sound words*,” were not written, for the apostle adds, “which thou hast heard from me.” They were to be *retained*, not in letters, but “in faith and love.” The adjective “*sound*,” means orthodox, excluding time and progressive action; the original is the participle *healing*. “*Sound words*,” mean a scheme of salutary doctrines, not a “form of prayer, as a liturgy.” But the writer has not a word in the passage to help him to carry back a creed, a liturgy, and a canonical bishop to the days of the apostle; they all arose long afterwards. Creeds were first made by individuals, then by councils. The *primus presbyter*, by increase of power, became a parochial bishop, like the Presbyterian pastor; and afterwards a diocesan. Forms of prayer were introduced for the prevention of heresy, first in particular churches; this power the councils afterwards regulated, and thus rendered forms provincial. Could the construction of this text, attempted by this writer, be established, and the assumption, that episcopacy, either parochial or diocesan, did then exist, which is contrary to historical verity, he would have accomplished an anticipation of the existence of creeds and liturgies, of episcopal jurisdiction, and of the monopoly of this right of the respective churches, several centuries; all of which things fell in gradually afterwards. But in such construction of the text, every word of the apostle is taken in a sense which he did not intend.

“In Hebrews x. 22, there is an intimation of previous absolution, and preparatory cleansing.” He who comes to Christ by faith finds absolution, but neither in this, nor in any other passage of Scripture, is there “an intimation of previous absolution.” Sacerdotal is an infringement of God’s prerogative, who alone can forgive sin. That the act is declarative not

authoritative, ministerial not judicial, softens the error, yet may it delude an immortal soul with a false passport to heaven. Absolution prior to the twelfth century was matter of prayer; afterwards it assumed the form of a sentence passed. By "absolution and preparatory cleansing," may have been intended that, which, according to the council of Carthage, preserved by Cyprian, accompanies baptism when performed by ministers, not, in their view, heretical. In the first canon of that council we read, "It is fit that water be first purified and sanctified by the Spirit, that it may be able by its own baptism to wash away the sins of the man who is baptized." In the forms of prayer vindicated by this writer, we accordingly read, "Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin." *That water should wash away sin*, is indeed a *mystery*, for a physical cause then produces a moral effect, that which is not contained in itself. That by washing away of sin is not meant the *guilt* of sin, appears by his eleventh article, "we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of Christ;" it must be understood consequently of the *pollution*; but the purification of this, is expressly referred to the Holy Spirit in the thanks prescribed in the same forms, "that it hath pleased thee" *the Father*, "to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit." Thus, therefore, we are taught, by the same *forms*, both that the water and the Spirit remove moral pollution; but how, the writer can best show. That baptism is an absolution, or pardon of sin, is an old opinion; but to gain our credence, better proof is required than the canon of a fallible council. Yet its continuance in the church, as if a true doctrine, may have been effected by the influence of written forms. Such a fact argues much for written liturgies, with those who hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; but it must have an opposite tendency in the view of those who reject the doctrine, with as little ceremony as they do the written forms.

“*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another.*”<sup>c</sup> In this there is a mutual and general confession, as well as a mutual and general prayer enjoined.” That auricular confession was unknown to the ancients, that public confessions were required only for public offences, and that private confessions were optional, are points, in which it is presumed we have no disagreement with the writer. We may, nevertheless, not understand this passage in the same manner. The language appears to us to describe mutual private confessions of our weaknesses, that we may obtain advice, and aid each other by joint prayers; and instead of a presumption favorable to written, or precomposed prayers, we discern rather an implication of prayers suited to the particular trials of such persons.

“I pass now to the fathers, from whom the same instances, which have served to prove the use of set forms, may be advanced as authorities for the forms themselves.” Yet is there not a single instance of a written prayer produced, except the Lord’s prayer. The singing of psalms he could easily show. We also use psalms and the Lord’s prayer, and have no objection to the creed; but do not use it in worship. As no early example has been, or can be produced, of a liturgy, in the modern sense of the term; nor a fact made to appear in opposition to the representation we have repeatedly given, of the manner of the introduction of set forms, it is unnecessary again to pass through the same things. The only liturgy in this number, said to have existed, is that of Gregory Thaumaturgus, which we have seen was only a doxology, from which Basil in Arian times departed. The other testimony of Basil regarded psalmody. Now he is introduced saying, “When the people *have confessed* themselves unto God rising up from their prayers, they betake themselves to psalmody;” which may be com-

<sup>c</sup> James v. 16.



pared with Basil on the thirty-seventh psalm, when he observes: "I do not make confession with my lips to be seen of the world; but inwardly in my heart, where no eye sees;" whereby it will appear, that he must have meant secret, or at least unwritten prayers.

His proofs, he thinks, "agree in this point, the necessity of public, common, and unanimous, therefore, precomposed prayers." Thus does he concede, that he has so far failed of exhibiting "forms used in the church in all ages," that he has no otherwise proved "precomposed" prayers, than as such are to be inferred from the necessity of "public," "common," and "unanimous prayers." We suppose the prayers in our churches to be "*public*," for all hear them; "*common*," for every one, who chooses, makes them his own, using the same petitions, or mentally saying as he thinks fit; and "*unanimous*," for all the worshippers; in adopting the same expressions, and having the same ideas, have, as nearly as possible, *one mind*; yet the confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings may be those which occur to the speaker without preparation, or even a single "*precomposed*" sentence. If prayers may be thus public, common, and unanimous, without being precomposed, the argument of the writer has failed; and by his own representation, he has produced no proofs of the use of forms in the first ages of Christianity.

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#### NUMBER VIII.

Every man's conscience testifies, he is to account for himself; and thus evinces his right to choose and act. As those, who are allied in sentiments will in-

cline, so they have a right, to associate for mutual improvement. If a single church may justify itself to men, on the foundation of the natural rights of its members, so may denominations. And so long as these respect the natural rights of each other, a diversity in doctrines, or modes of worship, constitutes no just ground of complaint. In America our natural rights are guaranteed by the authorised expressions of the social compact; and nothing is to be apprehended from those, who hold, "That *the church* hath *power* to decree rites and ceremonies, and *authority* in controversies of faith." Were we to hold this, in opposition to the natural right of freedom from physical constraint and restraint, we could neither justify the reformation effected by our fathers, nor claim liberty of conscience, nor preach the gospel. Thus understood *the church* is infallible, and reason an empty name. When the equivocal term, "the church," is interpreted as extending to all denominations of Christians, the article, however defective of support, has lost its offensiveness. They who receive it in a peculiar sense, being orthodox to themselves, claim to be the only church of Christ, and can join with no others in the efforts of the day. Under this construction our fathers groaned; to us, the claim is as innocent, as that of the man who thinks the world his own.

In the ninth number of "Liturgical Considerations" in the Church Register, the respectable writer—"analyzes the constituted forms used in the public service of the church of England." His views, on many points, no otherwise affect others, than as they imply a censure. After the "exhortation" in the morning service, he introduces the "confession," affirming, that "it comprises all those things, which each person individually, and each society collectively has need to confess." Perhaps, nevertheless, when the pious worshipper has returned to his closet and his knees, he may feel the propriety of some further confessions. He speaks "of the blessings promised by the Saviour

to all those who repent;" but the "confession" itself more correctly represents the promises to be *of God*, "declared unto mankind *in Christ Jesus our Lord*."

The "absolution," in the first form, is the priest's claim of "power," and profession of compliance with a commandment to pronounce the penitent forgiven: in the second, the language is precatory, but spoken to the people. To each they say, "amen;" but not as a prayer, because it affirms no address to Deity. The propriety of the "confession" is clear, but of the "absolution" problematical. If we should after the morning prayer, which always contains a confession, speak, on every Sabbath, of the power given us to declare all those forgiven, who have confessed their sins; either the people would suppose us vain of our office; or think their own confessions of great account. Since the heart is known to God, humility seems to require, that our imperfect services should be left with Him, under a conviction that they merit no good. But, "the sincere Christian having repented *and* confessed," receives "the declaration of pardon in God's name and words." Although neither the profession of Christianity, howsoever sincere, nor the reading or rehearsing of the morning service is any certain proof of repentance; yet does this language imply it; and if herein the writer accords not with the book, which he explains, it is unaccountable, that a ministerial absolution should have been made a part of the daily service. The Latin fathers of the middle ages considered oral confession, or even a groan, to amount unto repentance, "*Si ingemueris salvaberis.*" But if evangelical repentance be something vastly different; and if many of the pious preachers, who use these forms, do not intend to declare an absolution of sin to every one who made the confession; nor to account this repentance; why should this service continually exhibit an insufficient repentance, and force ministers to pronounce a forgiveness of sin, which they do not believe they have a right to absolve. But the book is con-

sistent with itself, for the justification supposed to be conferred by baptism, rests also upon a verbal profession and promise.

Because the "absolution" closes with the name of the Saviour, the writer observes; "that there is not one prayer in the church service, which does not depend entirely for its hope of acceptance with God, upon the alone merits of Christ." This claim is something, for Christ is the *way* to the Father, directs us to ask in his name, and through him alone we have a rational *hope*. But bold assertions ought not to have been substituted for matters of fact, against an objection so old. Whilst we congratulate the writer for his orthodoxy in believing, "that all prayers, whatever they may be, and all services, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus;" we observe in the forms he would inculcate, in numerous places, prayers offered *to* the Mediator as such, and not to God; and we see not how these are offered *through the Mediator unto God*. Thus, "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;" either addresses Christ as Mediator, or as God: on either interpretation, it is not a prayer to God, through Christ. If it be replied that Christ is God, we answer it is true; and as such he is ever an object of worship in and with the Father; but as Christ he is not God, but the *anointed*, that is commissioned of God in a subordinate character. As Mediator he is also our priest, through whom we approach the Father in our prayers, relying upon his sacrifice; and our prophet directing us by his word to come *in his name*. Though present with his people, it is only as God, his human nature has ascended and will remain in heaven until he comes to judgment. If his soul and body were here, the human nature could not help us, for it could be only in one place at a time. But the writer observes, "*The Lamb of God* is set before our eyes of faith, and with words of fervour we supplicate him *to take away our sins*. The wounded spirit finds comfort in communing with God in various



prayers and supplications." But it should be remembered there is one object of worship, and no more; and on this point, we are allowed no variety in our prayers. Jesus as a man does not hear us. "The Lamb of God," expresses two distinct ideas. When the "Lamb—is set before our eyes of faith," he is the ground of our acceptance with God, but the sacrifice is man not God: let the *fervour* of our *wounded spirit* be what it may, we are to worship God only; and in the way which he has prescribed, and in no other. The expressions, "Lord have mercy;" "Christ have mercy," so repeatedly echoed from the minister and the people, as to become mere sounds, were taken from the popish forms, not from the word of God. They not only destroy the solemnity of public worship but are theologically incorrect; for neither may we approach general mercy without a mediator, nor put the mediator as such on the throne of God; his place is only on the *right hand*.

The "*Gloria Patri*" is a very suitable conclusion of the praises, but the frequent repetition of it, in the same service, by the western churches, and especially those useless words, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be," which were added long afterwards, seems rather intended for pomp, than devotion.

The "*Gloria in excelsis*," so far as the angel's words extend, is suited to particular occasions, and was sung at Christmas, on communion seasons, and also as a morning hymn. We have not found it in use before the fourth century. In the word of God we find no one praying after the manner of the residue of this prayer. The Lord's prayer was directed to the Father as God, and so the first clause of this might have been understood, notwithstanding the perplexing similarity of its terms, which scarcely admit of intelligible discrimination; but the second clause is directed solely to the Son; at the close, the Third Person is distinctly addressed, and the writer denominates the whole "a joyful recognition of the blessed Trinity." We have



no dispute with him about the doctrine of the Trinity, we allow each person to be God, but not each to be a God. They may be named in succession, as in the benediction; yet are they one God, and one essence; each may be named alone as comprehending deity, but then the other persons are not excluded. In the "*Gloria in excelsis*" the Son is not worshipped merely as God, but as mediator. "Thou who sittest at the right hand of God, have mercy upon us." The Son, as God, is above being exalted; it is the glorified human nature of Christ which is placed at the right hand of God, which means promoted to the highest created dignity. Mercy comes to man through him, but it is from God himself, and to him should we apply for mercy through this glorified intercessor. "For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord," are exclusively addressed to "Christ." Christ is Lord, but he is so *to the glory of God the Father*, for his regal authority being subject to him, who put all things under him, must not exclude the sovereignty of the three—one God. Many pious believers offer up this "*Gloria in excelsis*" with right feelings; and God, we hope, accepts the homage; we would not cast a straw in the way of such; but truth is in order to holiness; and when we are charged with sin for not joining in such worship, we may be permitted to show our reasons in the fear of God.

The Lord's prayer is again to be spoken by all. The frequent repetitions of the *pater noster* were a commutation for the ancient severities of penance, or so many days of fasting, and were received from those, who were not able to buy off their penance by alms. Every protestant rejects, with merited contempt, not only indulgences, but the more ancient discipline of penance. With these things in our view, and the Saviour's express prohibition of *vain repetitions*, why should we repeat again and again, the same petitions, in the same service? At first this prayer was not used in public, then it was not allowed to catechumens, af-

terwards it was used without restriction, and finally, in the seventh century, a council decreed its use on every day by the clergy, on pain of deposition, because of the petition, "give us this day our *daily* bread;" but the word "*daily*" should be "*necessary*;" the root of the original word having been mistaken.

"After these," *the prayer and the collect*, comes the recital of the commandments by the minister, the ambassador of God, from the altar, which is always in a situation elevated above the body of the church." Priesthood, altars and sacrifices were types, and having been fulfilled, they were taken away and the substance of all has passed into the heavens, consequently no authority exists under the Gospel for any of these things.

The "commandments" are of the same utility, as when given; to these, therefore, we have no objection. When read from Ebal and Gerizim, in the hearing of the contiguous tribes, the scene was solemn, by express command, and never repeated. Where are gospel ministers required to imitate this, and to consider themselves authorized to personate the great God in reading his law? Their embassy is peace. We have also some objection to the prayer-book version of these commandments; "wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day" is no part of the fourth commandment. The Jews foisted the word "*seventh*" into the Septuagint to enforce their seventh-day worship, but the Hebrew, and the Samaritan texts have "sabbath" and not "seventh," at that critical place, where the change perverts the whole commandment; the original design of which was to require one seventh of our time, and not the observance of the seventh day of the week. According to the prayer-book, the fourth commandment is repealed, but according to the twentieth chapter of Exodus, it binds the Christian to observe the *Lord's day*, as much as it did the Jews to keep the *seventh*.

“Last of all comes the Nicene creed, &c.” We question neither the propriety, nor the truth of the creeds, if allowed our own interpretation of them; but deny their authority. Also we doubt the propriety of making them a part of the devotions of worshipping assemblies; and of requiring the common people to say, they contain their faith. If they do not understand the expressions “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made,” &c. how can they believe them? Such language would lead the uninstructed to the idea of two Gods. When in the council of Nice it was objected, that the light, which was from the sun, was not the sun; it was necessary to admit, that the idea of abscision must be excluded.

After all, if our brethren prefer the use of such forms, they shall have them without our censure; but justice dictates the same extension of charity to us. Had the unknown but pious writer made himself better acquainted with our exceptions against written forms, and with the reasons for our mode of worship, he would have witholden his censures, and saved us the painful necessity of parrying one, among the numerous attacks made upon us in the Church Register.

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#### NUMBER IX.

THE tenth and eleventh numbers, under this title, in the Church Register, exhibit a second time the writer's arguments in support of the morning service. Neither with that service have we any concern, nor with those who use it, except sincerely to desire their edification and comfort. To their forms we have neither right nor disposition to object; it is only be-

cause criminated for the neglect of them, that we complain; and esteem it our duty to deny, that they either rest upon Scriptural authority, or primitive example. But on those two points, we have been, in these numbers, ingeniously anticipated. The order of the morning service is pursued, the facts are distinctly named, a single text of Scripture is given in support of the general duty; *custom* is then alleged, and names of witnesses are given, but no testimony is brought. The *observations* of the writer follow; but his conclusions, being without premises, preclude all examination. So far as the writer depends upon his former representations, we offer nothing more, than the answers already given. With respect to his present positions, no issues having been tendered, no proofs submitted to investigation, no censures directly inflicted, and his main object appearing to be the promotion of piety, in which we bid him God speed, little is required from us, though we differ *toto cælo* from many of his views.

#### THE ABSOLUTION.

“*Scripture authority.* ‘Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted.’ St. John xx. 23.

“*Custom.* That this was a practice of the primitive church, we learn from St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Cyprian, and all antiquity.

“*Observation.* The absolution is a declaration of God’s pardon to sinners upon their repentance—pronounced to them by his ministers, &c.”

Peter received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that is, authority to open the gospel, that he might, after the death of Christ, first preach the glad tidings both to Jews and Gentiles. Thus he observed, (Acts xv. 7,) that “*a good while ago,*” at the conversion of Cornelius, “God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, *by my mouth,* should hear the word of the gospel,



and believe." The authority of his doctrine is also mentioned, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." The same language he afterwards used to all the apostles. The terms binding and loosing were adopted by the Jews for pronouncing things forbidden or lawful, as has been often shown; accordingly, both in Matthew xvi. 19, and xviii. 18, the neuter is used, because doctrines, not men, were introduced. Or, if in the latter, discipline be meant, it comes to the same thing, for if the apostle in the exercise of it produced either true repentance, or the opposite effect, the moral character, and consequently the real state of the party would be discovered.

In like manner the words in John xx. 23, "whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, are retained," are to be understood. For when they received the inspiration of suggestion, what they thus uttered from him, whether doctrinally or judicially, was the word of God.

In respect to *custom*, we allege, that remission is strictly of guilt, that is, of obligation to punishment; this is, to treat a sinner as if he were righteous, or to justify, in the sense of the Scriptures, which is the act of God only. Absolution by apostles was not the exercise of "power," but the revelation either of doctrinal truths, or of a sentence of God discovered to them. That any man, since their deaths, has possessed this inspiration of suggestion, we ought not to believe till it is proved. That the early Christians had no idea of the forgiveness of sins by any mere man, is evinced by the frequent use made by the writers of the first centuries, of the fact of Christ's having forgiven sin, to prove his divinity.

To the *observation* of the writer we can, in this instance, have no objection; for, omitting the word *power*, he has rendered the absolution a mere "declaration." A *power* in ministers to forgive sins is the



obvious sense of the words in the service, but as this is not the view of the writer, we are free from imputation for not adopting it.

#### THE SHORT PRAYERS OR RESPONSES.

“*Scripture authority.* ‘Continue in prayer,’ (or accompany one another without ceasing in prayer.) Colossians iv. 2.”

For “continue in prayer and watch in the same,” he substitutes “accompany one another without ceasing in prayer,” rightly omitting the *and*, and restoring the participle; nor do we complain of the changing of the places of the verb and participle; but the sense of the word translated “*watching*,” is not “accompany one another.” This mistake is unaccountable, unless the Greek word for *watching*, being almost the same with the Latin for a *flock*, they have been inadvertently confounded. The Greek is, “continue in prayer watching in it;” or, persevere in prayer, keeping your attention awake in it. The word for prayer is also used for a *place of prayer*, but not in this passage, because it is joined *with thanksgiving*.

Of the thundering *amen*, and alternate praises, enough has been shown; other responses were adopted afterwards, probably because of the ignorance of the darker ages; but that they are duty, and necessary to public prayer, cannot be shown. Prayer is a speaking to God, and consequently excludes, so far as we are occupied in it, conversation with each other.

#### THE CREED.

“*Scripture authority.* ‘Hold fast the form of sound words.’ (2 Tim. i. 13.)

“*Custom.* Tertullian affirms the use of creeds in all churches.

“*Observation.* No wonder then that the apostolic injunction should have been adopted in all the churches.”

That Paul refers Timothy to any thing written, either for him, or the church at Ephesus, by the expressions “*hold fast the form of sound words,*” we have shown to be excluded by the original terms, and also by the circumstance, that such truth was to be retained “in faith and love.” Thus one of the premises being removed, the conclusion is without support.

When the first churches were planted, they remained under the occasional instructions of the extraordinary teachers, till persons were found qualified in point of knowledge to teach, and of prudence to govern the society. If division arose, they were kept without officers longer, as at Corinth and Rome. The persecution at Ephesus rendered presbyters necessary soon after the departure of Paul. Every furnished church aimed to continue the same doctrines which they had received from the apostles and evangelists, and they afterwards appealed to each other, as witnesses of those truths, against heretical innovations; but had there existed a common creed, it would not have been concealed by the early writers. The letters of the apostles succeeded to the high authority of the writers, and were to the churches better than creeds. Their utility against heresies we admit, and have shown their inception; but hesitate upon the propriety of a public recital of them in worship, for reasons assigned in a former number.

#### LET US PRAY.

“*Scripture authority.* ‘Exhorting one another.’ (Heb. x. 25.)

“*Custom.* The deacon in ancient services was wont to call upon the people often, ‘*Let us pray vehemently,*’ ‘*nay, still more vehemently.*’”

The propriety of a notice to pray, requires no proof,

especially in the view of those whose prayers are written. '*Let us pray vehemently,*' nevertheless, forms some contrast with such expressions as "keep thy foot, when thou goest into the sanctuary;" "let thy words be few;" "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." When prayers become a task, and repetitions are made a penance, devotion has ceased. Importunity should be the offspring of humility, and uttered with reverence and godly fear; prayer is not the labor of the lips, but the breathing of a holy soul.

"*The prayer for the President and all in authority,*" accords with the duty of every one, but the duty extends not to the writing and reading of such prayer; yet a printed form might be a protection to the characters of some, and a check to the political propensities of other ministers. Nor is this the only instance in which forms might prove a relief, for the extempore mode is liable to numerous abuses. Some prayers are grossly adulatory, others give vent to private resentments; some are almost wholly doctrinal, others equally catch at the praises of men by their style or manner; some exhibit the speaker, with a few like himself, saints of the highest order, possessed of full assurance, praying for the sinners among the audience, who, of course, are not to join in the prayer; whilst others repeat, like schoolboys, moral sentiments, painfully charged upon their memories; some describe Deity as rigorously just, without mercy, and others appeal to general mercy only, giving encouragement even to the impenitent. That such abuses obtain, ought not to be concealed; they furnish, nevertheless, no reason for our rejection of the original mode of public prayer; but if any, for the prevention of such evils, resort to written forms, we are more culpable, if it be a fault to use them, than they.

But prayers written with care, and revised, may still be imperfect; thus the words, "We beseech thee, that we, with all those that have departed in the true faith, may have our perfect communion," &c. in

the excellent burial service, are manifestly a prayer for the dead, but contrary to the intentions of those who use it.—“Who has knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son,” &c. including *all* the glorified *saints*, might not escape the censure of being too doctrinal, if spoken by a Presbyterian.—“Bless and sanctify with thy word and Holy Spirit these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine”—“Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin”—“Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins”—are petitions which we cannot understand or cannot receive, and in which, for these reasons, if there were no others, we ought not to unite. Nor could we pray for the “manifold gifts of the apostles, and grace to use them,” because the gifts have ceased; and if we had them, they might prove temptations.

If our prayers are at best imperfect, and if all the modes be subject to abuse, and the reasons for and against forms be numerous and various, it is probably best, that there should exist churches, differing in their modes of worship, equally without censure: but, especially, those who follow forms, have no right to justify themselves *upon the grounds assumed by this writer*. The experiment has evinced a total defect of proof, that his liturgy is founded either on commandment, or primitive practice; an event which might have been foreseen; for others, with higher advantages, have also failed in the attempt to establish the same things.

## NUMBER X.

WHILST the pious writer under this title, in the Church Register, as well as every other member of the respectable denomination to which he belongs, possesses the unquestionable right of worshipping in the forms which please themselves, this right should be exercised with justice to others. We make no complaint because they believe in the divine authority and antiquity of their ritual. But when they publicly assert their forms to have been founded upon the command of God himself, and supported by the examples of Christ, the apostles, and first churches; and charge us with guilt, who reject them; the matter of fact, that no such precept and examples have existed, is our defence, and justice prompts to deny the charge.

In the morning service "the next form of prayer to be considered, is the litany, or general supplication." The proofs marshalled establish, what no one doubts, the propriety of general supplications. Also that the Greek word litany means supplication, is admitted. But "the litany" to be supported, is a *particular collection of prayers* distinguished by that name. Yet neither is a word of evidence brought for preconceived forms, nor an example given of a dialogue of prayers, like this, in sixty-three petitions and answers. But, instead of a justification of its subject matter, the writer has given a panegyric on this portion of the service. "The litany begins with an earnest, and solemn invocation of each person separately for mercy." Here are three addresses to the divine persons, as to three distinct beings ubiquitary, omniscient and able to show mercy. The Scriptures exhibit one divine being, one object of worship, not tritheism; a plurality indeed in deity of some kind, which we call *personal*, is essential to the scheme of redemption, But this litany contains



three supplications to three distinct beings, and is the worship of three Gods separately. The following supplication to the "trinity," a word never to be used in worship, because not in the Scriptures, will not remove the objection. This word, taken to mean three and one in different respects, although it be not its natural force, is the best we can frame. But we are not able to discern, why the very same petition for mercy should be first offered to each person individually, and then to the "*trinity*" as such, unless it be under the persuasion, that there are three beings, who think and act sometimes severally and sometimes conjunctly. We are taught to pray to the Father as God, asking for the sake of Christ, under the sanctifying influences of the Spirit; we know of no other way prescribed in the sacred word. The residue of the litany, about five-sixths of the whole, is directed to the Mediator and Son, and is consequently a plain departure from His own direction to ask the Father in His name. Stephen and Ananias had visions of Christ, and addressed him. The worship of Christ by the church in heaven and on earth, was also a vision. Doxologies and benedictions naming the persons together as one God and thus *calling upon the name* of Jesus are obviously proper. The addresses of Polycarp in his letter, and at the stake, were also to one God, though the Father and Son are named. The letter of the church of Smyrna speaks of him as an object of worship, being the *Son of God*. Justin Martyr told the Emperor in behalf of the Christians, "we worship God alone."—That the orthodox Christians, before the Arian heresy every where held the divinity of the Son, and *called upon his name* with the Father is undeniably true. But that they offered distinct petitions and prayers to the Mediator, we have never found. Praises for the work of each in redemption are not liable to the same objections; yet those of which Pliny speaks, could not be justified, if they were directed to the man Jesus "as God" to the exclusion of the Father and the Spirit;

but that testimony was evidently mere hearsay, and furnished by one wholly ignorant of Christianity.

This is "a recognition of the blessed Trinity." True; but though our belief and our worship be inseparable, we ought not by using unscriptural forms and language in our public worship, to place stumbling blocks in the way of the weak. Such a litany instead of preventing, may produce unitarianism.

It carefully recognises also three orders, bishops, priests, and deacons; but of priests as officers in Christ's church, distinct from bishops, no one ever read a word in the New Testament. Considered as a human institution, we ought to be convinced, that it was rightfully introduced, before we venture to offer it in prayer to Him who claims the prerogative of legislating for his own church.

Next is introduced the "prayer or collect taken from the liturgy of Saint Chrysostom, and is therefore very ancient." This prayer appearing in the morning and evening service, and in the litany must be a favorite. This writer, known during his life by the name of John, whose dignity was according to that of the city of Constantinople, being their bishop, was born in the fourth and died in the fifth century, and long after his banishment and death was canonized, an honor if such it be, withholden from many whom God had inspired. As the denomination do not acknowledge this power in the Pope, we know not why it should be so often admitted in the saintships of the prayer-book; and are sorry to perceive this contagion spreading among our own, caught from the English Testament; we shall better know who have been saints, when the sentence of the final judge shall decide the question. We find days assigned to St. James, St. Peter and others; and also to "St. Michael and all angels," except we presume those who have fallen. But why angels should be called saints, and since we protestants neither worship them, nor ask their help, why they should continue to have a place among our devotions, are things to us

not very clear. As we neither worship Chrysostom, nor acknowledge his authority, especially in praying for the dead; nor esteem a prayer the more, because made by him, and no better than others, there seems to be no reason for honoring him with the name of a *golden mouth* in a protestant prayer-book. A "collect taken from the liturgy of Chrysostom?" There is no liturgy of Chrysostom; that which bears his name was not his. On this very account the learned Bingham went through the tomes of Chrysostom in search of vestiges of a liturgy. He found the Lord's prayer, the evangelical hymn, the words of institution of the two sacraments, the salutation and the benediction. He has turned the exhortations of the deacons into what he calls *bidding prayers*; but they are not prayers, for they are spoken to the worshippers, not addressed to Deity, who is spoken of in the third person. His proofs taken in their connexions respectively, from the Greek homilies of Chrysostom, establish not the use of a liturgy at Constantinople at that period. But if they had gone so far, that fact at so late a period would not have furnished the least authority for a precomposed liturgy.

The unknown writer next presents to us the canonical year, commencing with "the advent," and with devotional pathos describes the progress of his ritual in the nativity, circumcision, epiphany, lent, good Friday, Easter, ascension, and whitsuntide: thus making the whole year a succession of anniversaries of the events of gospel history. Though it was a happy substitution for pagan observances, the occasion has long ceased, and of these numerous feasts, fasts, and holy days, the posing question now occurs, "who hath required these at our hands?" Certainly God hath not, and no other hath a right. But self-defence is our only aim, we willingly leave others to their own convictions.

The doctrine of the Lord's supper as explained in the twenty-eighth article, as well as in our Confession and catechism, follows too nearly Calvin's trimming

unintelligible scheme of *eating and drinking spiritually*. In the edition in the time of Edward the sixth, it is rightly expressed; that, "the body of Christ cannot be present at one time, in many and divers places." The bread and wine remain unaltered by prayer, and can never produce any new physical effect, nor operate as a charm; they may become *signs and seals*. The article rightly affirms, that, "the sacrament of the Lord's supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up and worshipped." But the communion service, though it does not affirm a change of the substance of the bread and wine, yet contains a consecration of them, by which they are blessed and sanctified in such a sense, that if more bread and wine be necessary, the consecration must be repeated, and if there be a surplus, the "minister shall return to the Lord's table, and *reverently* place upon it what remaineth of the consecrated elements, covering the same with a fair linen cloth;" and "it shall not be carried out of the church, but the minister and other communicants shall immediately after the blessing, *reverently* eat and drink the same." These things were probably designed to prevent superstition, yet seem to imply some effect wrought upon the elements, which is wholly incomprehensible.

He argues for commencing the communion with the Lord's prayer from "the propriety of engaging" *God's* favor with this prayer, which his own beloved Son gave us as a never failing spring of grace and help. Where such views exist, the frequent repetition of that prayer is as excusable, as if it were believed, that the repetition of it a number of times merits the greatest blessings. This is to waive the necessity of faith, and of that grace, which produces it; and to treat the perfect, and therefore immutable God, as a subject of motives. That Christ gave that prayer, "as a never failing spring of grace and help," is neither fact nor sound doctrine. That the communion service, at an early period, should commence



with that prayer is very natural; for public worship began with reading the scriptures; next followed a homily, exhortation, or discourse; the deacons then dictated petitions to the catechumens and penitents, and immediately after imposition of hands on the penitents excluded them, because deemed unfit to say, "Our father," &c. Silent devotions succeeded, followed by a public prayer; in which the Lord's prayer, being generally known, would first occur, as the privilege of those present, then followed the communion. The nineteenth canon of the provincial council of Laodicea may be taken as the course of worship, in use at least in Asia Minor, after Justyn Martyr, and prior to the council of Nice; but it neither mentions a public liturgy, nor affords a proof of written forms.

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#### NUMBER XI.

SEVERAL things in the fourteenth number of this title in the Church Register, appear exceptionable, but our object is neither censure nor criticism, but merely defence of truth. When the writer asks, "May we not then justly admire such arrangement, and be encouraged with the fact, that we worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness?" the use of the liturgy in public worship, seems to be identified with the *beauty of holiness*: yet the 110th Psalm was not prophetic of pre-conceived forms, but of the spiritual worship of gospel times.

"May we not then say of the church service that it is at unity with itself?" As the service here spoken of belongs to "the church," there is no other. This exclusive claim unchurches every other denomination; and those who make it, are *at unity with themselves*,



when they refuse every evangelical coalition and act, correspondent unto every effort of the day, something of a kindred nature, that the church may retain its integrity without danger of commixtures; but for what ulterior purpose, we are unable to discover. If all others be out of covenant, it is strange that any thing good should originate with them, and be found worthy of imitation. The last number of the Church Register admits this representation, by publishing as true, though from a Presbyterian, "that the evangelical party" in England, "are more rigid in their peculiar notions of church government, and more disposed to talk of Episcopalians as the church than the anti-evangelical." Of this matter we profess to know nothing, except that whilst the Philadelphia Recorder has treated us as fellow Christians, the Church Register has, from its commencement, in alternate strains of transatlantic superciliousness, and querulousness against evangelical men and measures, spoken against Presbyterians and "evangelical" Episcopalians, in terms which cannot fail to rouse to self-defence. Thus, without ceremony, in one of his last numbers, he characterises "Presbyterianism" by what he represents it to be "in Canada;" where there are those "who neglect baptism, rather than have that rite performed by an Englishman in holy orders." "Presbyterianism in Canada" still groans under the intolerance of "the church," whilst conscience, as in every former age, refuses to yield to compulsion. "Presbyterianism" every where admits the validity of Episcopal baptism; but no where approves the papal appendages attached to it in the prayer-book. Suppose a bigoted Canadian, present in Philadelphia, should answer the editor by alleging, that he had heard his pastor in Scotland say, that to require sponsors to affirm in the name of the child, that it believes and promises, when it is physically incapable of both; to consecrate the water; to mark the forehead with it transversely as a cross; and to have a bishop to finish by confirmation, assuming the apostolic extraordinary power of the

gift of the Spirit, what the presbyter had begun by removing sin by baptism, are all human inventions, and on that account to be rejected; what would the editor, who is "in holy orders," reply? The justice of the imputation cast upon the Canadian, must depend upon the truth and weight of his answers.

No doubt he would say, that so long ago as the beginning of the fifth century, the bishop of Hippo alleged in defence of this practice "that sacraments would not be such, if they bore not the similitude of the things of which they are sacraments"—"as the sacrament of the body of Christ is in some manner his body, so the sacrament of faith is faith, therefore to answer that an infant believes, who is incapable of believing, is to answer that he has faith, because he receives the sacrament of faith." But the false answer must be given before the child is baptized, for it constitutes, by its terms, the condition upon which the child receives baptism; otherwise, if nothing but the effect of baptism is meant according to Augustine, the question is useless and absurd. But the right of infants to baptism, whose parents are in covenant, depends neither upon stipulations in behalf of the infant, nor upon the faith either of the parent or child, or even of the administrator of the ordinance, but upon the will of God; for in the Old Testament he has expressly given them the right, which has never been taken away; and in the New, has pronounced them *holy* or set apart to himself, in cases where they would have been excluded by the customs of the Jews.

The editor might also say to the second objection, that the consecration of the water by prayer, the Holy Spirit being supposed to descend from heaven upon it, may be found to have been believed at the commencement of the third century. Afterwards in the consecration, the water was sapiently marked with the sign of the cross; and in the days of Augustine, the blood of Christ was supposed present with the water, as in the eucharist.

With respect to the sign of the cross, he might re-

ply, that in early days, the persecuted Christians signified their profession to each other by secretly crossing themselves. That this had been added to baptism before the middle of the third century, is shown by Cyprian; and that it was in constant use afterwards, by Augustine, Jerom, and others.

With respect to confirmation, he could say, that at the commencement of the third century, when a person was baptized, unction, imposition of the hands of the presbyter, with prayer for the Spirit, immediately followed. But when the presiding presbyter had obtained a canonical ordination, a monopoly of the title of bishop, and a control in almost every thing, he also assumed the right of imposition of hands and chrysm, with prayer for the Spirit, confirming the baptisms of the presbyters. Thus Jerom speaks of the custom of the bishop's imposing his hands, and of invoking the Holy Spirit upon those, whom presbyters and deacons had baptized. Also, that it was decreed by a council, that infants were not to be confirmed, except by the bishop, or by his direction. Baptism being thus severed from the anointing, or in the Latin church, imposition of hands denominated confirmation, each was by a council of Carthage termed a sacrament or mystery. It was not, however, till the eighth or ninth century, that confirmation was withholden from infants as soon as baptized. And that on these grounds, at present, confirmation is a distinct rite, peculiar to the canonical bishop.

To all these things, the despised Canadian Presbyterian might rejoin, that they arose since the apostles' days, and were human contrivances.—That confirmation, so far as an aping the extraordinary powers of the apostles, was absurd, and that the church had neither power to decree a canonical ordination, nor to introduce a new sacrament.

Why should "Presbyterianism in Canada" be held up to censure for that self-preference, which is a distinguishing characteristic of "the church" in Phila-

delphia? The hardy peasant of the north had the same right still to "love the church of Scotland," and to "carry his children forty miles over the snow" for baptism, as the editor of the Church Register had to lumber the mails in every direction with his preference of "the church service above all others." Such predilections for either of these denominations are of no importance, except as they may, by affecting the conscience, become injurious. The only probable mean of removing them is the calm investigation of the truth which ought to and will prevail, when the names and distinctions about which the potsherds of the earth are striving, shall have drooped into merited and eternal oblivion.

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## NUMBER XII.

ANOTHER transatlantic writer is introduced by the Church Register, in support of the same cause, to whom, because of his dignity, we seem bound to pay our respects. He asks, "with what feelings of confidence can a congregation have recourse to prayer, which has been accustomed to hear, that a decree has already, before the foundation of the world, gone out from God, by which the final destiny of every man is irrevocably doomed, and indeed that such is the necessary consequence of the undeniable foreknowledge of Deity?" "The real conclusion, and the practical evil of the doctrine of the election meet together." These sentiments, being not more an imputation on those, who teach according to the Westminster Confession, than those who have adopted the articles contained in the prayer-book impose no necessity of self-vindication upon us, that does not equally fall upon the



orthodox, of his own church; nevertheless their connexion with that which follows them precludes our total silence.

If the object of worship does not know future things and actions, he must be growing wiser progressively, is consequently imperfect, and, by the voice of reason and revelation, not God. But if perfect, his knowledge, which must be therefore perfect, is also in other respects wholly unlike that of his creatures. Our ideas originate from things, and imply their previous existence; but things all spring from the great first cause, and are the effects of his power accomplishing his previous purposes; the divine knowledge thus wholly differs from human, ours consisting of the pictures of things, whilst things are the images of his knowledge, and nature, grace and glory constitute a stupendous scheme present in all its parts to the divine mind in his eternal purposes. The decrees of God are not acts, but such purposes, and immutable like himself, because founded in wisdom which is perfect.

But it is complained that thus "*the final destiny of every man is doomed.*" Infinite knowledge sees the end from the beginning, and it sees also every mean that conduces to the end. With respect to men, it discerns all the iniquity, which is to bring the final *doom* or condemnation upon the impenitent. When this shall be revealed to all at the judgment, every rational creature will see and approve; and if it shall be then right to condemn the reprobate, it could not have been wrong to have purposed from eternity to do that, which shall then be seen to have been just.

That the eloquent bishop, from whom the *excerpt* is taken, should pronounce "*the doctrine of election*"—"a *practical evil*," whilst the seventeenth article of his church declares it to be "full of sweet, pleasant and unspeakable comfort," is somewhat strange. The framers of the articles saw no relief for the guilty, but in the sovereignty of God; whilst the prelate has either a higher opinion of human rectitude, or ima-



gines the moral governor less scrupulous of his honor. But that God has given laws, and appointed a judgment; that he will sustain the honor of his rectitude, neither making any to account for what they did not receive, nor punishing any but for their sins; and that every man possessed of the ordinary natural faculties of a man, is conscious of a freedom from constraint and restraint, are indisputable facts. But if the government he has erected be perfect, and the contrary is an unworthy supposition, there can be no reason for the pardon of sin to prevent a failure of justice; accordingly what is so called is really a justification, for which provision has been secured by the Sovereign of the Universe in the original constitution, that is, in the eternal purposes, on which the government is founded. Why then should the bishop of Winchester take away our only hope? In other words, why should he conceal *the sovereignty of God*, in which high but rightful character only he could have purposed the erection of his moral government, the scheme of redemption, and the salvation of fallen men, and upon what terms he pleases. On him as sovereign there can be no claims, for he is wholly independent, yet in this character alone can we approach him in the attitude of prayer; whilst we know that in his gifts of grace and glory, as well as in those of his providence, he may do with his own as he pleases; and have his word that when we are fit to receive, he is ready to give, for that every one who asketh receiveth. The seventeenth article must have been written under a full view of such truths.

*But if a decree has gone forth before, there can be no confidence in prayer.* There would be no just ground of confidence, if there existed no connexion between means and end; if all was uncertain; if an imperfect and mutable being guided the universe, liable to be swerved by a thousand petitions hourly addressed to him, ready to subject the dictates of wisdom and the demands of justice to the importunities of the selfish,

and ever disposed to surrender the public good to private advantage. The decrees of God are not revealed to us, and can be no rule of our conduct, either in matter of providence or grace. If we pray in faith, he has thereby given us a pledge; but if we have not faith, our duty to confide is not the less, because success is not promised. The purposes of God include the means as well as the end, consequently either is as sure as the other. The same objection lies with respect to the gifts of providence; in ploughing and sowing and every other work the success ever depends upon him, without whom a sparrow descends not to the ground. If the confidence, which is destroyed by the idea of a perfect government, consists in a dependence upon the excellence of our prayers, the purity of our desires, or the merit of our services, it is best that it should be destroyed. That confidence of a worshipper, which is taken away by a belief in the immutability of the divine purposes, which are always right, is a false hope resting upon some imaginary previous failure on the part of the divine vigilance or purity. It is an astonishing fact, that Dr. Sumner prefers to worship a God, whom he can change by his prayers; yet such change must be either for the better or the worse; if for the better, he chooses to worship an imperfect God; if for the worse, we dread to speak the consequences. There is no other alternative, for a change, neither for the better nor the worse, would argue defect of wisdom. This view of prayer we should not expect from a bishop of Winchester. Protestants address one who knows them altogether, their ways, and thoughts, and destinies. We do not pray to inform our Maker of that which he knew not; nor wish to change him, who is perfectly wise, and always does what is best. We desire to fall in with his purposes, submit to his will, acknowledge his government, and bring our hearts into unison with the dispensations of his providence and grace. To expect to reveal to omniscience, what he knows not; to

desire to change purposes, which are the wisest and the best, and therefore immutable; and to conceive of the eternal Sovereign, as if he were a frail mortal are mental exercises the reverse of moral purity as well as correct theology; and have a direct tendency to destroy, rather than to establish confidence in Christian devotions.

It is also the opinion of this bishop of bishops, that *a congregation should not customarily hear of decrees*. But if God possesses perfect wisdom, and all his actions accord with purposes of such character; if his power effectuates his designs and he always sees the end from the beginning; if every prophecy is a revelation of his purpose, of his foreknowledge, and of the consequent certainty of the accomplishment, there can be no reason for the concealment of such perfections. Yet if these be erroneous representations, and if there be neither purpose, knowledge, power, nor other perfection; nor any certainty, then ought they neither to be *heard* nor uttered. It would then also follow, that there is no God, and that atheism, being truth, should become the order of the day. Such tremendous conclusions neither can Dr. Sumner, nor the editor escape. They suppose Presbyterians to believe, that God has arbitrarily and irreversibly determined, that men shall or shall not be saved without any respect to their faith or obedience; but we abhor such a doctrine as much as they can; and hold that whenever a man has been elected to salvation, such salvation can only be attained in a way of holiness; and that when a man is appointed to destruction, he cannot be lost, but by his sins. Even Christ's exaltation, which they will acknowledge was absolutely decreed, could not have obtained, unless he had performed the terms upon which it was suspended. The assistance, which his human nature received from the divine, does not alter the case; because it was but a mean, and also decreed. In a similar manner an absolute purpose, called a decree of election to glory, may comprehend at the same time events depending on voluntary agency, and those

spiritual aids, which shall secure the repentance, faith, and holiness, without which the party could not be saved. When these duties are not performed the party may blame himself, and justly perish in his sins; there being in him no defect of power, but only of disposition, spiritual aid denominated grace would be a mere gift not debt, an act of sovereignty not justice, since the party was not forced to sin. Though it is thus undeniable, *that events may be absolutely decreed, and be therefore certain, which depend on the intervening conduct of moral agents, who are free*; yet is there a portion of our fellow Christians, who would limit the perfections of God himself, rather than admit, that predestination and election, though implying no more than the *certainly of divine purposes*, can be reconciled with the possession of the liberty necessary to moral agency.

That the most precious doctrines may be abused and thus become *practical evils*, and that this of election has been often perverted to the hardening of reprobate minds, is matter of lamentation. But instead of denying the perfections of God, and his rightful sovereignty we ought to discriminate between this and his rectoral government; and while we point out with clearness, the natural powers and liberty we possess as moral agents, and for the right use of which we are, and ought to account, it becomes us to acknowledge our guilty alienation, and aversation of heart, which some call a moral inability, and our need of these sanctifying influences, without which we shall go on in sin, and fall under the deserved sentence of final condemnation. But as often as men can be brought to pray for such aid with the heart, and right views, they are the subjects of the grace they ask.

As God is perfect, he can have no accession of knowledge, or change of purposes; what he does, he does, for ever; nor can he be at a loss to accomplish his designs, for all things are his, and under his direction, and every heart at his disposal. Nothing therefore can be more unreasonable, than to suppose, that the infallible certainty of an event excludes the



very means which are appointed by God himself to render such event finally sure.

All good, and all evil that is physical, are from God; but moral evil is a negative idea, and requires no positive cause. To bestow good implies a purpose, and the Scriptures call it when the good is future an election. As a mean of saving a guilty world redemption has been provided, and is offered to all even the worst. If any were hindered and repelled, the positive refusal might be ground of complaint. If non-election be a decree, it is a decree *not to decree*, which is a negative idea, and not an act: nor is the permission of sin a decree, for to permit is *not to hinder*, and a mere negation. No excluding decrees exist, nor are they implied in election. The purpose to punish those, who deserve to suffer for their sins, is as just as to do the thing, when the trial has been passed. This is all the reprobation we hold; and these truths, we think, ought to be *heard by every congregation*, and if they become *practical evils*, upon them rests the blame, who abuse them.

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### NUMBER XIII.

BAPTISMAL regeneration is the subject, presented by the excerpts in the Church Register, for our present reflections.

Those apostolic addresses, in which whole churches are denominated *members of Christ, buried with him in baptism, the spiritual circumcision, and temples of the Holy Ghost*, are alleged by Dr. Sumner to have been “founded on the principle that the disciples had been brought, by their dedication to God in baptism, into a state of reconciliation with him, had been admitted to privileges which the gospel calls on them to improve. On the authority of the example, and of the undeniable practice of the first ages of Christianity, our church considers baptism as *conveying regeneration.*” And af-



terwards he observes, that “the preacher of *special grace* must, consistently with his own principles, lead his hearers to look for some *new conversion*, and expect some sensible regeneration. This brings him to use language in the highest degree *perplexing* to an ordinary hearer.”

The members of the churches thus addressed, had certainly been baptized, and having, by that rite, been received into visible communion, there was a presumption, that their professions, which had been deemed credible, were true. It was, therefore, of course, for the apostle to treat them as saints. That their dedication in baptism was *prima facie* evidence of their being in a state of *reconcilement*, may be admitted; but that such reconcilement was the effect of baptism, by no means follows.

The ancient and apostolic condition demanded of those who sought baptism, was, *if thou believest thou mayest*; and the credible profession of such faith, gave the adult the right to be baptized. But *he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*. It follows that every adult, before he received baptism, was deemed to have been regenerated. Now that regeneration should have been the *previous qualification* for the reception of an adult into the visible church by baptism; and yet have been the *consequent spiritual blessing* to be conveyed to the party by the same baptism, is an obvious repugnancy.

These texts, nevertheless, and many others, do establish that a change of some kind is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon those who are really united to Christ. Some think, that the *powers of the soul* are strengthened; others that *knowledge* is communicated in some such manner as that by which the prophets and apostles received the suggestion of ideas and words; but if regeneration consisted in the reception of new powers, or new light, or any thing which the unbeliever is physically unable to accomplish, then is he an object of pity, not the subject of just blame. But it is

the heart which is alienated; a change of disposition is that which is wanting; this consequently must be the regeneration which the Spirit effects, whereby the man becomes a *member of Christ* and an *inheritor of the kingdom of heaven*.

That baptism is a "sign of regeneration" is correctly observed by bishop Chase (Church Register, vol. iii. p. 181) to be not only the language of the 27th article, but of the Westminster Confession, and Cambridge and Saybrook platforms. But if, as he asserts, the first "*dissenters*" went with "the church" in the sense entertained of the "efficacy of this holy sacrament," it was certainly not in that which the bishop holds. We cannot suppose that the learned bishop does not perceive, that to account baptism a *sign* and even a *seal of regeneration*, is vastly different from the position that every one who receives such sign or seal, receives with it that *change of nature, heart, or disposition*, which the dissenters mean by regeneration.

However "*uninformed*" we may be, we never *misreport* of his church, that they hold the final conservation of the truly regenerated, and however "far, very far" it be from the worthy bishop to hold that doctrine, as he confesses, we are very sure, that he will hold it, if ever he understands the Scriptures correctly. If we were to impute to "the church" any of several systems of doctrines, we should be in danger of "*misreporting*," for we are as much at a loss to know what they hold, as the Earl of Chatham, who said to the bench of bishops in the house of lords, My fathers, what are you? Your articles are Calvinistical, your liturgy Papistical, and your sermons Arminian. My right reverend fathers, what are you?

According to the bishop of Winchester, his "church considers baptism as *conveying* regeneration," consequently baptism is not regeneration. When he represents us as *perplexing our hearers* by "leading them to look for some *new conversion*, and to expect some sensible regeneration," he considers the regeneration, which he thinks is conveyed by baptism, to be a "con-

version," but *insensible*; and by affirming that they follow *ancient example and practice*, we are enabled to discern a striking similarity; for it was in *ancient* times believed, that the Spirit descended upon the consecrated water, and by it, in some way, regenerated the soul of the person baptized.

In the New Testament, regeneration is sometimes taken in a figurative sense for baptism, *born of the water*; at other times for the reformation of the life or practice, *born of the word*; it is also used for the resurrection, approximating its classical sense; but passing by these, the two bishops appear to agree in using the term to express the spiritual change, *born of the Spirit*; which they suppose to be *conveyed* into the soul by the Holy Ghost, by means of baptism; and because it supersedes what Dr. Sumner denominates a *new conversion*, preached by *dissenters*, there is no room to question, notwithstanding the difference we make between regeneration, as an *immediate effect* of the Spirit, and conversion as a *consequence*, that their ideas nearly accord with our own, as to the effects of the spiritual influence; for we are as far as Dr. Chase from supposing any to be *wholly renewed*.

The question about which we differ, seems, therefore, merely to be, *whether baptism is the mean of conveying the spiritual blessing*.

Baptisms among the Jews were external purifications; such were those of John, and of the disciples of Christ, before his death. The dispute which the Pharisees had about purifying, must have regarded the propriety of their using this ceremonial rite.

When a proselyte was received to the Jewish religion, circumcision, baptism, and a sacrifice constituted the ceremony of introduction. And when it became expedient that Christians should receive some distinguishing badge of membership, baptism in the name which the Saviour appointed, without circumcision and sacrifice, was the rite which he provided.

Although any great change might be denominated a regeneration, yet the idea of a new birth was pro-

bably derived from the Jews, who considered a proselyte as born again, not as having a new soul, but as adopted among the children of Abraham. The Saviour used the same phrase to signify to Nicodemus his need of a spiritual change; but when he could not make the transition from the idea of naturalization to that of a spiritual regeneration, the Saviour distinguished between a being born of the water and of the Spirit.

Paul also discriminated between circumcision and that of which it was the sign; and contended that Gentiles might have the circumcision of the heart, whilst destitute of the badge. So we think regeneration may obtain before, at, or after baptism; that the sign may exist with, or without the spiritual change; and that it may become also a seal to the unrenewed, whensoever they are afterwards born of the Spirit.

To limit regeneration to the washing with water, appears to us without authority; and to make it the certain effect of an external rite, is nearly allied to mysticism. How water applied to the body should convey spiritual influences to the soul, and change the disposition, is beyond the reach of reason and science, and as it receives no support from the Scriptures, we can only assign it the character of a charm. Were dissenters thus to make water-baptism, which is a physical act, to be the infallible medium of a spiritual effect, they would, however *uninformed*, be justly chargeable with exposing the cause of Christ to the derision of the enemies of the gospel.

“The preacher of special grace must, consistently with his own principles, lead his hearers to look for some new conversion,” &c. True, for though Dr. Sumner would confine the Spirit to influence by the medium of water, yet the tenth article of his church points to another regeneration, which he improperly denominates some *new conversion*. Pelagius held no other grace than Providence and pardon. Semi-Pelagians admit spiritual aid, but free-will must begin the change. That article opposes them both, by the



words, "Grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." This is precisely the doctrine of those stigmatised as preachers of *special grace* by the bishop; and also the identical regeneration which is not *conveyed* by water. This doctrine may be perplexing to *hearers* in the diocese of Winchester, but we suspect it is much better understood in the states of America than the baptismal regeneration.

We are sorry that the phrase *special grace*, with which Dr. Sumner too justly upbraids us, ever came into use; yet no more is meant by it than by the words quoted from the article. Also, if the Arminian perversion denominated *common grace*, an imaginary, universal, resistible, inefficacious influence, had not been introduced, the term *special* could not have appeared as its contrast; thus the blame justly recoils upon those of his own faith.

But when the term *special grace*, being equivalent to grace simply, is taken to signify that influence of the Holy Spirit by which the soul is regenerated, in other words, the heart or disposition is changed and progressively sanctified, no inconvenience can spring. The work of the Spirit in regeneration, in which man is *passive*, ought to be distinguished from conversion, in which man is *active*, in turning *from sin* by repentance *to God* by faith in Jesus Christ. Accordingly the Scriptures consider sanctification to commence in regeneration; but conversion, or turning from sin in the exercise of a holy disposition and a corresponding deportment to God, are man's duty, though the fruits or effects by which the new birth is to be known.

As the outward circumcision made a child of Jacob a Jew outwardly, and without the circumcision of the heart, he was not one inwardly, or really an heir of spiritual blessings; so to be *born of water* only, renders a man merely a member of the Christian church, and gives him a title to its privileges. Consequently, until he is *born of the Spirit*, that is, regenerated or baptized by the Holy Ghost, he is not adopted, justified, sancti-



fied, nor will he be found to be an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Paul had been circumcised on the eighth day, but not in heart, till on the way to Damascus, nor baptized till afterwards.

That the word regeneration may be taken either for a being *born of the water, born of the word, or born of the Spirit*, we have admitted; but neither can it justly be inferred from the words, "except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit," nor from the connexion in which they occur, that the one birth is either the immediate *effect* of the other or its necessary *concomitant*. On the contrary we are cautioned by an apostle against any reliance on water-baptism in the matter of salvation, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience."

There has been, too long, a disposition among our own to depreciate the talents God has given to man, to restrict his freedom in the exercise of his faculties, and to make him a machine. On the other hand *the church*, though sufficiently orthodox in her articles, has, in her teaching, gone into an opposite extreme, and either magnified human power with Pelagius, referring all to moral suasion; or supplied its supposed defects with Arminius, by imagining grace to be given to all, and exhorting only to improve it; or by supposing every one to be regenerated by baptism, and brought into a state of reconciliation, taught them to *expect* no other regeneration, nor to look for a new conversion. Thus in the Spirit's work of regeneration, though Jesus Christ, comparing such influence with the invisible air, has said, "no man knows whence it cometh," the bishops of Winchester and Ohio, supported by their liturgy, say, We know whence it cometh, for it is *conveyed by the water in baptism*.

It has been argued, that if baptism be "attended by no real grace," there is no *benefit* and the *sacrament is nullified*, for it is not even a sign of regeneration, since so many after baptism live profane and unholy lives. The unscriptural word *sacrament*, which signifies mystery, may thereby lose its original intention,

but the truth is that this melancholy fact of subsequent impiety is proof, that the water does not regenerate the soul; yet impenitency cannot hinder that baptism should remain a sign to accuse and stare the baptized infidel, at every step of his career in wickedness, and the abused benefits redounding from church membership may become an additional source of eternal misery.

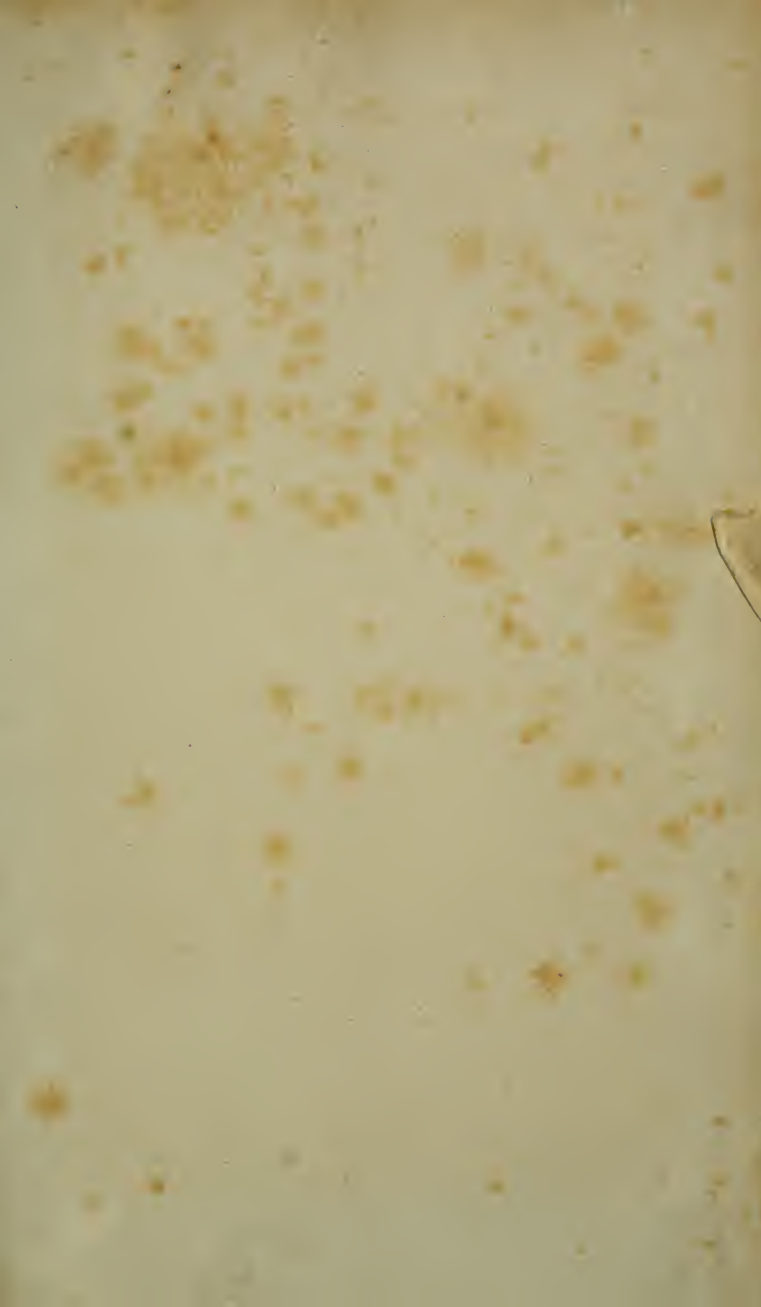
It is asked, "are—the doctrines of efficacious grace and its necessary consequence, final perseverance, to be supported in spite of the Scriptures?" We reply, the term "perseverance" which we are ashamed to see in the Westminster Confession, bears too close an affinity to Arminianism, to be found in such sense in the Scriptures; but we use *conservation* in the sense attributed by the ancient divines, as well as Dr. Sumner, to perseverance, as its substitute; and acknowledge with him, that it is the necessary consequence of efficacious grace; for if it be not efficacious, and if there be any good, that comes neither mediately nor immediately from God, but springs from man, then is man independent, and God has ceased to be supreme. Nevertheless the divine supremacy and man's dependence in the most unrestrained exercises of his will, appear in the Scriptures almost in every page. And it is by this grace, which thus conflicts with the liturgy, that the saints *are kept unto salvation*.

In our simplicity, we had thought regeneration a change of heart, a new and right spirit given by God immediately, and that what he does, he does forever; but the amiable bishop of Ohio affirms that his church "finds no such regeneration in the Holy Scriptures, she holds to *no* such in her articles, expositions, or ritual solemnities"—and admits no other than "a regeneration by water and the Holy Ghost." That is, according to Dr. Sumner, baptism is that which conveys regeneration; but the Scriptural expression is grammatically "*born of the water and*" born "*of the spirit*."

This doctrine naturally leads men to believe, that

divine power has no effect *in* man, but only *towards* him; provides moral means, but sends no immediate influence; that man is possessed of moral ability as well as physical powers; and consequently that human agency, and self-sufficiency supercedes the necessity of immediate spiritual aid. But if that divine influence, which the prophets foretold of the Gospel era, and for which Jesus Christ taught his disciples to look and to pray, has no actual existence, *who will receive the report?* Will the *natural man receive the things of God, except the arm of the Lord be made bare?* Will the *carnal mind lay aside its enmity?* Does the *Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?*

But such questions are superseded by this doctrine, which teaches that every one who has been baptised, is regenerated. "When," says the bishop of Ohio, "does the regenerated state of man commence? If words can be so framed as to give a plain answer, they are those of the apostle, when we are *baptised into Christ*—"for as many of you as were baptised into Christ, have put on Christ." The worthy bishop will excuse us for saying, that this passage will not prove, that the inward spiritual grace, always accompanies the outward visible sign; because its sense is fixed by the context, Gal. iii. where Christ is contrasted with Moses, and the Gospel with the law for the purpose of opposing the *liberty of Gospel* against the *bondage of the law*; so that this text means no more, than, that they who came out of the water of baptism, and put on other clothes, also put on the profession of Christ, and were no longer bound to the ceremonial observances of Moses.









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